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THE  
**GOSPEL-MYSTERY**  
OF  
**SANCTIFICATION**  
OPENED,

*IN SUNDRY PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS.*

SUITED ESPECIALLY TO THE CASE OF THOSE WHO LABOUR  
UNDER THE

**GUILT AND POWER OF INDWELLING-SIN.**

TO WHICH IS ADDED, A  
**SERMON ON JUSTIFICATION.**

—●—  
*BY WALTER MARSHALL,*  
LATE PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL AT GOSPORT.

—●—  
TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,  
A RECOMMENDATION BY ELEVEN DIVINES.

—  
“God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty,” &c.  
1 COR. i. 27—31.

—  
FROM THE TWELFTH EUROPEAN EDITION.

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*NEW-YORK:*

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY SOUTHWICK AND PELSUE,  
No. 3, New-street.

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## ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE TWELFTH EUROPEAN EDITION.

IN printing the *eleventh* edition of this judicious treatise of the justly celebrated Mr. MARSHALL, entitled, *The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*, in the year 1786, the present Editor had recourse to the *fourth* impression of that book, the only correct one he had seen, printed at Edinburgh, in the year 1744; by which means, a great number of errors and mistakes, some of them very *material*, that had crept into some after editions of it, have now been corrected and amended; which will, he hopes, make the perusal of it more acceptable to the intelligent reader.

To the Rev. Mr. HERVEY's warm recommendation of this excellent treatise, there is now annexed his short *defence* and *additional* recommendation of it, selected from his valuable writings, not formerly published with any editions of this tract, till the editor published them with his last impression of it.

Many sincerely regret, that *Mr. Marshall* did not more fully enlarge upon that important subject of JUSTIFICATION, subjoined at the end of this valuable treatise, as it would have been an acceptable present

to the church ; though it is admitted, the **Discourse** is a most judicious compend of that important doctrine.\*

There are few practical pieces that have been more acceptable to the piously disposed of every denomination of Christians, than this excellent treatise, or stands more fully recommended by so many eminent divines: and when the names of the two judicious *Erskines*, *Hervey*, and other great divines are among the recommenders of it, it is no wonder it should be purchased with avidity, and also perused with pleasure and advantage.

**WILLIAM SMITH.**

*Glasgow, August, 1789.*

\* If the reader chooses to see a further illustration of this important doctrine of **JUSTIFICATION**, he may consult the **Lime-street Lectures**, being a defence of some important doctrines of the Gospel, and this one among others, printed some years ago, by **W. Smith**, in two handsome volumes, Vol. II. p. 60—138.

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## RECOMMENDATION

BY THE REV. JOHN M. MASON, D. D.

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TO those who make living religion their *study*, and are anxious to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *Mr. Marshall's Treatise on Sanctification*, rightly used, will be of extensive benefit. It is a book of *principles*, connected regularly together, and mutually supporting and being supported by each other. It is, therefore, a book which requires the reader to think, to deliberate, to compare. A cursory perusal will be of little advantage ; a partial one will probably do hurt, as it will expose the author to almost certain misconstruction, and the truth itself to unfounded prejudice. But they who can relish solid matter without the attractions of ornamental style, who will be at the trouble to *understand* Mr. Marshall before they pronounce their judgment, and shall apply his book to the end for which he wrote it, will find, in its weighty sense, much spiritual aliment, and be greatly assisted in bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are, by JESUS CHRIST, to the praise and glory of God.

J. M. MASON.

New-York, Oct. 8, 1810.

## PREFACE.

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### READER,

MR. WALTER MARSHALL, composer of these *Directions* how to attain to that *practice* and *manner* of *life* which we call *holiness, righteousness, or godliness*, was educated in New College of Oxford, and was a fellow of said college, and afterwards he was chosen a fellow of the college of Winchester, but was put under the Bartholomew Bushel,\* with near two thousand more lights, (*a sin not yet repented of*) whose illuminations made the land a Goshen. He was esteemed a Presbyterian, and was called to be pastor to a people at Gosport in Hampshire, where he shined, though he had not the public oil. The substance of these meditations were there spun out of his *own experiences*; he having been much exercised with troubled thoughts, and that for many years. He had, by many mortifying methods, sought peace of conscience; but notwithstanding all, his troubles still increased. Whereupon he consulted others, particularly Mr. Baxter, whose writings he had been much conversant with; who thereupon told Mr. MARSHALL, he took them too legally. He afterwards consulted an eminent divine, Dr. T. G. giving him an account of the state of his soul, and particularizing his sins, which lay heavy upon his conscience; who, in his reply, told him that he had forgot to mention the *greatest sin of all*, the sin of *unbelief*, in not believing on the LORD JESUS for the remission of his sins, and sanctifying his nature. Hereupon he set himself to the *studying* and *preaching* CHRIST, and attained to eminent "holi-

\* This alludes to the Act of Parliament, after the restoration of Charles II. 1660. ejecting a vast number of eminent faithful ministers from their charges, because they could not comply with prelacy.

ness, great peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Mr. MARSHALL's dying words were these, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" having but just before said to those about him, "That he now died in the full persuasion of the truth, and in the comfort of that doctrine which he had preached." The sum whereof is contained in the ensuing Discourse.

Some time since he was translated by death, Elijah-like, dropping these sheets as his *mantle* for succeeding Elishas to go forth with, for the *conversion* of sinners, and *comfort* of drooping souls.

These papers are the profound *experiences* of a studious holy soul, *learned of the Father*, coming from his very heart; and smell of no party or design, but for *holiness* and *happiness*. Yet, it is to be feared, they will scarcely go down with the heady notionalists of this age, who are of the tribe of Reuben, wavering with every wind of modish doctrine; but in Judah they will be praised. And we hope that many shrubs and cedars may hereby advance in *knowledge* and *comfort*.

But, not to detain you longer, read over *all* these Directions, that you may fully understand the Author, or read *none*. If you do it with the serious humble spirit in which they were wrote, it may be hoped, (the matter being so weighty, and from so able a hand) through the grace of God, they will sink into thy conscience, and make thee a *solid* christian, full of *faith*, *holiness*, and *consolation*.

N. N.

July 21, 1692.

THE Author of these *Directions* was well known to me, and was with me in my house a month together, about twenty years past; and I esteem him a person deserving the character which this Preface giveth him.

T. WOODCOCK.

July 21, 1692.

## RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE,

PREFIXED TO THE EDITION PRINTED AT EDINBURGH,  
IN THE YEAR 1733.

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THIS excellent Treatise of Mr. MARSHALL's, though it is well known among the godly in England, where it has undergone a twofold edition, yet this being the first time of its publication in Scotland, where it is known to but few, we could not refuse, at the desire of those concerned in the publication of it among us, to declare, that, as we have perused the book ourselves, with great edification and pleasure, so we know it hath had the high approbation and testimony of many eminent for grace and holiness; and judge the publication of it, at this time of the day, seasonable among us, for promoting practical religion and godliness, and for giving a just view of the vast odds there is between heathenish morality, adorned with the finest flourishes of human rhetoric, and true gospel-holiness, without which, *no man shall see the Lord.*

And this our testimony we judge to be well supported by the words of that great and evangelical person, Mr. ROBERT TRAILL, late minister of the gospel in the city of London, in his postscript to a pamphlet, entitled, "A vindication of the Protestant doctrine, concerning Justification, and of its preachers and professors, from the unjust charge of Antinomianism." "I think, says he, that Dr. OWEN's excellent book of Justification, and Mr. MARSHALL's book of the *Mystery of Sanctification by faith in Jesus Christ*, are such vindications and confirmations of the Protestant doctrine, against which I

fear no effectual opposition. Mr. MARSHALL was a holy and retired person, and is only known to most of us, by his book lately published. 'The book is a deep practical, well-jointed discourse; and requires a more than ordinary attention in reading of it with profit. And, if it be singly used, I look upon it as one of the most useful books the world has seen for many years. Its excellence is, that it leads the serious reader directly to JESUS-CHRIST, and cuts the sinews and overturns the foundation of the new divinity, by the same argument of gospel holiness by which attempts have been made to overturn the old. And, as it hath already had the seal of high approbation, by many judicious ministers and christians that have read it, so I fear not but it will stand firm as a rock against all opposition, and prove good seed, and food, and light to many hereafter.'

This testimony, abstracting from human frailties and escapes, to which the greatest men are liable, while they know but in part, we homologate by our subscriptions.

ALEX. HAMILTON,  
EBENEZER ERSKINE, } at Stirling.

RALPH ERSKINE,  
JA. WARDLAW, } at Dunfermline.

Jo. GIB, at Cleish.

JA. OGILVIE, at Aberdeen.

## A NEW RECOMMENDATION,

*By the Rev. Mr. Adam Gib, Minister of the Gospel in the Associate Congregation of Edinburgh.*

**THOUGH** the due recommendations foregoing, wherewith these following Directions have been formerly sent abroad, be what I pretend not to add any weight unto by my assent, there seems not, however, any thing superfluous, in applying unto two sorts of persons, an advice, which hath been already given, with respect to the reading of this book.

Among the professors of a religious course, some do still adhere unto a *legal* scheme of holiness, vainly making it the reason of their peace and hope, or, at least, of their venturing to found both on Christ; and others are reconciled unto an *evangelical* scheme of holiness, verily making it the result of their peace and hope, as already founded on Christ, freely offered to them in the gospel.

The *correction* which one of these sorts, and the *instruction in righteousness* which both of them need, may be peculiarly gained from this book: and, for these purposes, they are earnestly entreated to peruse it *completely*, and in the *same order* wherein written: so that the one sort may not, from looking first into the latter part, throw it aside as *Antinomian*; nor the other sort, from looking only into the former part, throw it aside as *legal*.

In fine, whereas I have scarcely ever been acquainted with any practical composure, of human product, so evangelical, in a thread more connect, and a method more exact than this: I equally despair that any shall reap true benefit, in a partial and confused reading; and hope, that excellent fruit shall, through the divine blessing, redound therefrom, unto such as may read it otherwise.

To proceed thus far, in compliance with the inclination of some gentlemen concerned in this edition, is presumed by

ADAM GIB.

*Edinburgh, Dec. 31, 1744.*

Mr. HERVEY's Recommendatory Letter to the Publisher of a new Edition of Mr. MARSHALL on Sanctification, at London, 1756.

SIR,

IT gives me no small pleasure, to hear, that you are going to republish Mr. MARSHALL's *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification*.\* The instruction, consolation, and spiritual improvement, which I myself received from that solid and judicious treatise, excite in me a pleasing hope, that it may be equally instructive and advantageous to others.

The recommendation of it in *Theron and Aspasio*,† with which you propose to introduce the new edition, is at your service. To this proposal I consent the more readily, because Mr. Marshall's book may be looked upon as no *improper supplement* to these Dialogues and Letters. The author of which intended to have closed his plan with a dissertation on *practical holiness*, or *evangelical obedience*.—But this design was dropped: partly, on account of his very declining health; partly, because the work swelled under his hands, far beyond his expectation.

He has been advised, once more to resume the pen; and treat that grand subject, with some degree of copiousness and particularity. If he should be enabled to execute, what he acknowledges to be expedient, the doctrines already discussed, and the privileges already displayed, will furnish the principal materials for this essay. Justification, *free justification*, through the *righteousness of Jesus Christ*, is the sacred fleece from which he would spin his thread, and weave his garment; agreeable to that important text, *ye are bought with a price*; therefore *glorify God*.\*—If providence, in all things wise, and in all things gracious, should see fit to withhold either time or ability for the accomplishment of my purpose, I do, by these

\* It is said, by the very best judge of propriety in the sacred writing, "great is the mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii. 16. This passage, I presume, Mr. Marshall had in his view, when he pitched upon a *Title* for his book. And this passage will render it superior to all censure; unexceptionably just and proper.

† See this recommendation at the end of this letter.

‡ 1 Cor. xi 20.

presents, nominate and depute Mr. Marshall, *to supply my lack of service.*

Mr. Marshall expresses my thoughts ; he prosecutes my scheme, and not only pursues the same end ; but proceeds in the same way. I shall therefore rejoice in the prospect of having the *Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* stand as a *fourth* volume to Theron and Aspasio.— Might I be allowed, without the charge of irreverence, to use the beautiful image of an inspired writer, I could with great satisfaction say, “If *this* be a wall, *that* will build upon it a palace of ivory ; if *this* be a door, *that* will inclose it with boards of cedar.”\*

Mr. Marshall represents *true holiness*, as consisting in the *love of God*, and the *love of man* ;—that unforced, unfeigned, and most rational love of God, which arises from a discovery of his unspeakable mercy and infinite kindness to us ; that cordial, disinterested, and universal love to man, which flows from the possession of a satisfactory and delightful portion in the LORD JEHOVAH. These duties, of love to our Creator and our fellow creatures, are regarded as the sum and substance of the *moral law* ; as the root from which all true branches of pure and undefiled religion spring.—*Holiness*, thus stated, is considered, not as the *means*, but as a *part*, a *distinguished part of our salvation* ; or rather as the very *central point*, in which all the means of grace, and all the ordinances of religion, terminate.

Man, in a natural state, is absolutely incapable of practising this holiness, or enjoying this happiness.—If you ask, what is meant by a *natural state* ? It is that state, in which we are under the guilt of sin and the curse of the law ; are subject to the power of Satan, and influenced by evil propensities.—From this state none are released, but by being united to Christ, or, as the apostle speaks, by “Christ dwelling in the heart through faith,” Eph. iii 17.

*Faith*, according to Mr. Marshall, is a *real persuasion*, that God is pleased to give Christ and his salvation ; to give him *freely*, without any recommending qualifications, or preparatory conditions ; to give him not to *some* sinners only, but to *me* a sinner in particular.—It is likewise an *actual receiving* of Christ, with all the benefits, privileges, and promises of the gospel ; in pursuance of the divine

\* Cant. viii. 9.



gift, and on no other warrant than the divine grant.—This last office is particularly insisted on, as an *essential* part, or as the *principal* act of faith. To perform which, there is no rational, no possible way; unless, as our author declares, we do, in some measure, *persuade and assure ourselves*,\* that Christ and his salvation are ours.

As faith is such a persuasion of the heart, and such a reception of Christ, it assures the soul of salvation by *its own act*; antecedent to all reflection on its fruit or effects, on marks and evidence; it assures the soul of acquittance from guilt, and reconciliation to God; of a title to the everlasting inheritance, and of grace sufficient for every case of need. By the *exercise* of this faith, and the *enjoyment* of these blessings we are *sanctified*; conscience is pacified, and the heart purified; we are delivered from the dominion of sin, disposed to holy tempers, and furnished for a holy practice.

Here, I apprehend, our author will appear singular. This is the place in which he seems to go *quite out of the common road*. The generality of serious people look upon these unspeakable blessings as the reward of holiness; to be received, after we have sincerely practised universal holiness: not as necessary, previously necessary, to perform any act of true holiness. This is the stumbling-block, which our legal minds, dim with prejudice, and swollen with pride, will hardly get over. However, these endowments of our new state are, in our author's opinion, the effectual, and the only effectual expedient, to produce sanctification. They are the very method which the eternal Spirit has ordained, for "our bringing forth those fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and

\* It is not, by this expression affirmed, or insinuated, that we are able to *produce faith* in ourselves by any power of our own. This self-sufficiency the author has professedly and frequently disclaimed, asserting, that "the Spirit of God habitually disposes and inclines our hearts to a right performance of this most important act." This manner of speaking is used, I imagine, for two reasons: To point out the first and chief work, which we are to be doing, incessantly and assiduously, till our Lord come; to remind us that we must not expect to have faith wrought in us, by some fatality of supernatural operation, without any application or endeavour of our own; but that we must make it our diligent endeavour, and our daily business to believe in Christ. We must "labour to enter into his rest," and "show all diligence to the full assurance of hope."

glory of God."† Whereas, if there be any appearances of virtue, or any efforts of obedience, which spring not from these motives and means of practice, Mr. Marshall treats them as *reprobate silver*. He cannot allow them the character of *gospel holiness*.

This is the *plan*, and these are the *leading sentiments*, of the ensuing treatise. To establish or defend them, is not my aim. This is attempted, and, I think, executed in the work itself. My aim is, only to exhibit the most distinguished principles, in one short sketch and clear point of view; that the reader may the more easily remember them, and by this key enter the more perfectly into the writer's meaning. Let him that is *spiritual judge*;\* and reject or admit, as each tenet shall appear to correspond with the infallible word. Only let candour, not rigour, fill the chair; and interpret an unguarded expression, or a seemingly inconsistent sentence, by the general tenor of the discourse.

We are not to expect much pathos of address, or any delicacy of composition. Here the gospel-diamond is set, not in gold, but in steel; not where it may display the most sprightly beam, or pour a flood of brilliancy; but where it may do the most signal service, and afford a fund of usefulness. Neither is this book so particularly calculated for careless insensible sinners, as for those who are awakened into a solicitous attention to their everlasting interests; who are earnestly inquiring, with the Philippian jailor, "what shall I do to be saved?"† or passionately crying, in the language of the apostle, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"‡ If there be any such, as no doubt there are many, in the christian world, I would say with regard to them, as the Israelitish captive said concerning her illustrious but afflicted master, "would God my master were with the prophet that is in Samaria; for he would recover him of his leprosy"§ O that such persons were acquainted with the doctrines, and influenced by the directions contained in this treatise! they would, under the divine blessing, recover them from their distress, and restore them to their tranquillity; they would "comfort their hearts, and thereby establish them in every good word and work.||

\* 1 Cor. ii. 15. † Acts i. 30. ‡ Rom. vii. 24. § 2 Kings v. 3.  
† Phil. i. 11. || 2 Thess. ii. 17.

But I am going to anticipate what the following extract speaks.\* I shall therefore only add my hearty wishes, that you may meet with encouragement and success, in the publication of this *truly valuable piece*. Since there is, in this instance, an evident connexion between your private interest and the general good; I thing you may promise yourself the approbation and acceptance of the public: as you will assuredly have all the support and assistance that can be given by,

Sir, your humble servant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weston Faval, Nov. 5, 1756.

Mr. HERVEY's Recommendation of Mr. Marshall in his Theron and Aspasio, edit. III. vol. ii. p. 336. See it also in his works in octavo, vol. iii. p. 389.

"It is with great pleasure and without any diffidence that I refer my readers to Mr. Marshall's Treatise on Sanctification; which I shall not recommend in the style of a critic, nor like a person of taste, but with all the simplicity of the weakest christian; I mean, from my own experience. It has been made one of the most useful books to my own heart: I scarce ever fail to receive spiritual consolation and strength from the perusal of it: and was I to be banished into some desolate island, possessed of only *two* books, besides my BIBLE, this should be *one* of the two, perhaps the *first* that I would choose.

"Should any person, hitherto a stranger to the work, purchase it on this recommendation, I must desire to suggest one caution: that he be not surprised, if in the beginning, he meets with something new, and quite out of the common road; or, if surprised, that he would not be offended, but calmly and attentively proceed. He will find the author's design opening itself by degrees. He will discern more and more the propriety of his method. And what might, at first, appear like a stumbling-block, will prove to be a fair and ample avenue to the place of truth, to the temple of holiness, and bowers of happiness."

\* See it in the following page.

## Mr. HERVEY's Recommendation and Plan for improving Mr. Marshall's Treatise on Sanctification.

IT appears evident, by sundry of Mr. Hervey's Letters, particularly Letter 149, that an improvement of Mr. Marshall was intended by him, which was not got accomplished, on account of the declining state of his health. In writing to his friend, he says, "you will wonder to see how strongly I have recommended Mr. Marshall's Treatise on Sanctification, in the second volume of my Theron and Aspasio. It has been eminently blessed to my own soul: there is no religious treatise which I read, which does me more good. Pray, be so kind as execute what you proposed. Shew me how Mr. Marshall's method may be improved; for I would gladly tread in his steps on this account, as well as on others. Any apparent obscurity in his third and fourth Direction, says he, Letter 172, does not arise from any *improper manner* of treating the subjects, but from the *mysterious nature* of the subjects themselves. The remarkably instructive method of the Directions, says he, laid down by Mr. Marshall, (than whom no man, perhaps, was ever better acquainted with the human heart) for the effectual practice of holiness, as laid down and illustrated by him, is truly admirable.

The following is Mr. Hervey's intended plan of such improvement of Mr. Marshall's Treatise as he judged might answer the end; where, by changing the fourteen *Directions*, into the form of *Assertions*, or *Propositions*, the strongest objections are enervated.\*

### ASSERTION I.

That practice and manner of life, which the scripture calls holiness, righteousness, or godliness, obedience, true religion, is not attained by our most resolved endeavours, but is given through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue.

*Assert. II.* No man can love God till he knows him, nor till he knows him to be his everlasting friend. Therefore, the spring of true holiness, is a well-grounded persuasion of our reconciliation

\* See Mr. Hervey's Works, Vol. IV. p. 429—432:

with God, and of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness, and for sufficient strength given in him for all that he calls us unto.

*Assert. III.* These endowments, so necessary to the obedience of love, are continued in the fulness of Christ, and are enjoyed only by union and fellowship with him.

*Assert. IV.* The means or instruments whereby the Spirit of God accomplisheth our union with Christ, and our fellowship with him in all holiness, are the gospel, whereby Christ entereth into our hearts, begetteth us to the faith whereby we actually receive Christ himself, with all his fulness, unto the hope of eternal life by him. And thus, by the influence of the spirit of truth, we unfeignedly believe the gospel, and also believe on Christ, as he is revealed, and freely promised to us therein, for all his salvation.

*Assert. V.* The practice of true holiness is not attained by any endeavours of our natural state, but is a blessing of our new state given in Jesus Christ, and partook of by union and fellowship with Christ through faith.

*Assert. VI.* Those that endeavour to perform sincere obedience to all the commands of Christ, as the condition whereby they are to procure for themselves a right and title to salvation, and a good ground on him for the same, do seek their salvation by the works of the law, and not by the faith of Christ, as he is revealed in the gospel: and they shall never be able to perform sincerely any true holy obedience by all such endeavours.

*Assert. VII.* We are not to imagine, that our hearts and lives must be changed from sin to holiness, in any measure, before we may safely venture to trust on Christ, for the sure enjoyment of himself and his salvation.

*Assert. VIII.* True holiness of heart and life, hath its due order, where God hath placed it; that is, after union with Christ, justifica-

tion, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. It is not therefore to be expected, but in that order, as what accompanies salvation.

*Assert. IX.* It is only by the comforts of the gospel, revealing a just God and Saviour, that God works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

*Assert. X.* The comforts of the gospel, necessary to christian obedience, contain sufficient grounds of assurance of our salvation, not because we believe, but in a way of immediate trust and confidence. Therefore, instead of seeking other methods of peace and holiness, we must endeavour to believe or trust on Christ confidently; persuading and assuring ourselves, according to the divine declarations, that God freely gives to us an interest in Christ and his salvation, according to his gracious promise:

*Assert. XI.* It is therefore belonging to the practical part of the christian life, to maintain the same immediate trust and confidence, in dependence on the divine faithfulness, not to suffer us to be confounded, that so our enjoyment of Christ, union and fellowship with him, may be continued and increased in us.

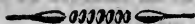
*Assert. XII.* The scripture calls upon Christians to walk no longer according to the principles, or means of practice, that belong unto the natural or original state of man, but only according to that new state, given in Christ, which we receive by faith, and the principles and means of practice, that properly belong thereunto; and to strive to continue and increase in such a manner of practice.

*Assert. XIII.* All ordinances of divine appointment, for the establishment and increase of our faith and love, are to be considered only in this way of believing in Christ, and walking in him, according to this new state given in him.

*Assert. XIV.* That we may be confirmed in holiness, only by believing in Christ, and walking in him by faith, according to the former assertions, we may take encouragement from the great advantages of this way, and excellent properties of it.

THE  
GOSPEL MYSTERY

OF  
SANCTIFICATION  
OPENED.



DIRECTION I.

That we may acceptably perform the duties of Holiness, and Righteousness required in the law, our first work is, to learn the powerful and effectual means whereby we may attain to so great an end.

EXPLICATION.

THIS direction may serve instead of a preface, to prepare the understanding and attention of the reader for those that follow. And,

First, It acquainteth you with the great *end*, for which all those means are designed that are the *principal subject* to be here treated of. The *scope of all is*, to teach you how, you may attain to that practice and manner of life which we call *holiness, righteousness, or godliness, obedience, true religion*; and which God requireth of us in the *law* particularly in the *moral law*, summed up in the *ten commandments*, and more briefly in these two great commandments of *love to God and our neighbour*, Mat. xxii. 37, 39. And more largely explained throughout the *holy scriptures*. My work is, to shew

*how the duties of this law may be done*, when they are known: therefore expect not that I should delay my intent, to help you to the *knowledge* of them, by any large exposition of them; which is a work already performed in several catechisms and commentaries. Yet, that you may not miss the mark, for want of discerning it, take notice, in a few words, that the holiness which I would bring you to is *spiritual*, Rom. vii. 14. It consists not only in *external works* of *piety* and *charity*, but in the *holy thoughts*, *imaginings*, and *affections* of the soul, and chiefly in *love*; from whence all other good works must flow, or else they are not acceptable to God, not only in refraining the execution of sinful lusts, but in longing and delighting to do the will of God, and in a cheerful obedience to God, without repining, fretting, grudging at any duty, as if it were a grievous yoke and burden to you.

Take notice further, that the *law*, which is your *mark*, is *exceeding broad*, Psa. cxix. 96; and yet not the more easy to be hit; because you must aim to hit it, in every duty of it, with a performance of equal breadth, or else you cannot hit it at all, Jam. ii. 10. The Lord is not at all loved with that love that is due to him as Lord of all, if he be not loved with all our *heart*, *spirit*, and *might*. We are to love every thing in him, his *justice*, *holiness*, *sovereign authority*, *all-seeing eye*, and all his *decrees*, *commands*, *judgments*, and all his *doings*. We are to love him, not only better than other things, but singly, as *only good*, the *fountain of all goodness*; and to reject all fleshly and worldly enjoyments, even our own lives, as if we hated them, when they stand in competition with our enjoyment of him, or our duty towards him. We must love him so as to yield ourselves wholly up to his constant service in all things, and to his disposal of us as our absolute Lord, whether it be for prosperity or adversity, life or death. And, for his sake, we are to love our neighbour, even all men, whether they be friends or foes to us; and so do to them in all things, that concerneth their honour, life,



chastity, worldly wealth, credit, and content, whatever we would that men should do to us in the like condition, Mat. vii. 12. This spiritual universal obedience is the great end, to the attainment whereof I am directing you. And that you may not reject mine enterprize as impossible, observe, that the most I promise is no more than an acceptable performance of those duties of the law, such as our gracious merciful God will certainly delight in, and be pleased with, during our state of imperfection in this world, and such as will end in perfection of holiness, and all happiness in the world to come.

Before I proceed farther, stay your thoughts a while in the contemplation of the great dignity and excellency of these duties of the law, that you may aim at the performance of them, as your end, with so high an esteem, as may cast an amiable lustre upon the ensuing discovery of the means. The principal duties of *love to God above all, and to each other, for his sake*, from whence all the other duties flow are so excellent, that I cannot imagine any more noble work for the holy angels in their glorious sphere. They are the chief works for which we were first framed in the image of God, engraved upon man in the first creation, and for which that beautiful image is renewed upon us in our new creation and sanctification by Jesus Christ, and shall be perfected in our glorification. They are works which depend not merely on the sovereignty of the will of God, to be commanded or forbidden, or left indifferent, or changed, or abolished at his pleasure, as other works that belong either to the judicial or ceremonial law, or to the means of salvation prescribed by the gospel; but they are, in their own nature, *holy, just, and good*, Rom. vii. 12; and meet for us to perform, because of our natural relation to our Creator and fellow creatures; so that they will have an inseparable dependence upon the holiness and will of God, and an indispensable establishment thereby. They are works sufficient to render the performers holy in all manner of conversation, by the

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fruits which they bring forth, if no other duties had ever been commanded ; and by which the performace of all other duties is sufficiently established as soon as they are commanded ; and without which, there can be no holiness of heart and life imagined ; and to which it was one great honour of Mosaical, and is now of evangelical ordinances, to be subservient for the performance of them, as means which shall cease when their end, this never-failing charity, is perfectly attained, 1 Cor. xiii. They are duties which we were naturally, obliged to, by that reason and understanding which God gave to man at his first creation, to discern what was just and meet for him to do, and to which even heathens are still obliged, by the light of nature, without any written law, or supernatural revelation, Rom. iv. 14, 15. Therefore they are called *natural religion* : and the law that requireth them, is called the *natural law*, and also the *moral law* ; because the manners of all men, infidels as well as christians, ought to be conformed to it, (and, if they had been fully conformable, they would not have come short of eternal happiness, Mat. v. 19 ; Luke x. 27, 28.) under the penalty of the wrath of God for the violation of it. This is the true morality which God approveth of, consisting in a conformity of all our actions to the moral law. And, if those that in these days, contend so highly for mortality, do understand no other than this, I dare join with them in asserting, that the best morally honest man is the greatest saint ; and that morality is the principal part of true religion, and the rest of all other parts, without which faith is dead, and all other religious performances are a vain shew, and mere hypocrisy. For the faithful and true witness hath testified, concerning the two great moral commandments of *love to God*, and *our neighbour*, that there is none other commandment greater than these, and that on them “hang all the law and the prophets,” Mat. xxii. 36—40. Mark xii. 31. The second thing contained in this introductory direction is the *necessity* of learning the powerful and effec-

tual *means*, whereby this great and excellent end may be accomplished, and of making this the first work to be done, before we can expect success in any attempt for the attainment of it.

This is an advertisement very needful; because many are apt to skip over the lesson concerning the *means* (that will fill up this whole treatise) as superfluous and useless. When once they know the nature and excellency of the duties of the law, they account nothing wanting but diligent performance; and they rush blindly upon immediate practice, making more haste than good speed. They are quick in promising, Exod. xix. 8. "all that the Lord hath spoken we will do," without sitting down and counting the cost. They look upon holiness as only the means of an end of eternal salvation: not as an end itself requireth any great means for attaining the practice of it. The inquiry of most, when they begin to have a sense of religion, is, "what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Mat xix. 19; not, how shall I be enabled to do any thing that is good? Yea, many that are accounted powerful preachers, spend all their zeal in the earnest pressing the immediate practice of the law, without any discovery of the effectual means of performance: as if the works of righteousness were like those servile employments that need no skill and artifice at all, but industry and activity. That you may not stumble at the threshold of a religious life, by this common oversight, I shall endeavour to make you sensible, that it is not enough for you to know the matter and reason of your duty, but that you are also to learn the powerful and effectual means of performance, before you can successfully apply yourselves to immediate practice. And, for this end, I shall lay before you the considerations following.

1st. We are all, by nature, void of all *strength* and *ability* to perform acceptably that holiness and righteousness which the law requireth, and are "dead in trespasses and sins," and "children of wrath," by the sin of our first father, Adam, as the scripture witness-

eth, Rom. v. 12, 15, 18, 19. Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. Rom. viii. 7, 8. This doctrine to original sin, which Protestants generally profess, is a firm basis and ground-work to the assertion now to be proved, and to many other assertions in this whole discourse. If we believe it to be true, we cannot rationally encourage ourselves to attempt a holy practice, until we are acquainted with some powerful and effectual means to enable us for it. While man continued upright in the image of God, as he was at first created, Eccl. vii. 19. Gen. i. 27, he could do the will of God sincerely, as soon as he knew it; but when he was fallen, he was quickly afraid, because of his nakedness; but could not help it at all, until God discovered to him the means of restoration, Gen. iii. 10, 15. Say to a strong healthy servant, "go, and he goeth: come, and he cometh: do this, and he doeth it:" but a bed-ridden servant must know first how he may be enabled. No doubt the fallen angels knew the necessity of holiness, and trembled at the guilt of their sin: but they knew of no means for them to attain to holiness effectually, and so continue still in their wickedness. It was in vain for Sampson to say, "I will go out as at other times, and shake myself," when he had sinned away his strength, Judg. xvi. 20. Men shew themselves strangely forgetful, or hypocritical, in professing original sin in their prayers, catechisms, and confessions of faith; and yet urging upon themselves and others the practice of the law, without the consideration of any strengthening, enlivening means: as if there were no want of ability, but only of activity.

2d. Those that doubt of, or deny the doctrine of original sin, may all of them know concerning themselves (if their consciences be not blind) that the exact *justice* of God is against them, and they are under the *curse of God*, and sentence of death, for their actual sins, if God should enter into judgment with them, Rom. i. 32. ii. 2. iii. 9. Gal. iii. 10. Is it possible for a man that knoweth this to be his case, and hath not learned any means of getting out of it, to practice the

law immediately, to love God and every thing in him, his justice, holiness, and power, as well as his mercy, and to yield himself willingly to the disposals of God, though God should inflict sudden death upon him? Is there no skill or artifice required in this case, to encourage the fainting soul to the practice of universal obedience?

3d. Though Heathens might know much of the works of the law by the common light of natural reason, and understanding, Rom. ii. 14. yet the effectual *means* of performance cannot be discovered by that light, and therefore are wholly to be learned by the teaching of supernatural revelation. For what is our natural light, but some sparks and glimmerings of that which was in Adam before the fall; and even then, in its brightest meridian, it was not sufficient to direct Adam, how to recover ability to walk holily, if once he should lose it by sin; nor assure him before hand, that God should vouchsafe to him any means of recovery. God had sent nothing but death before his eyes in case of transgression, Gen. ii. 17. and therefore he hid himself from God, when the shame of his nakedness appeared, as expecting no favour from him. We are like sheep gone astray, and know not which way to return, until we hear the Shepherd's voice. "Can these dry bones live" to God in holiness? "O Lord, thou knowest;" and we cannot know it, except we learn it of thee.

4th. Sanctification, whereby our hearts and lives are conformed to the law, is a *grace* of God, communicated to us by means, as well as justification; and by means of teaching, and learning something that we cannot see without the word, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. There are several things pertaining to life and godliness, that are given through *knowledge*, 1 Pet. i. 2, 3. This is a form of doctrine made use of by God, to make people free from sin, and servants of righteousness, Rom. vi. 17, 18. and there are several pieces of the whole armour of God necessary to be known and put on, that we may stand against sin and Satan in the evil day;

Eph. vi. 13. Shall we slight and overlook the way of sanctification, when the learning the way of justification hath been accounted worth so many elaborate treatises ?

5th. God hath given, in the holy scriptures, by his inspiration, plentiful instruction in righteousness, "that we may be thoroughly furnished for every good work," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. especially since "the day-spring from on high hath visited us," by the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, "to guide our feet in the way of peace," Luke i. 78, 79. If God condescend to us so very low, to teach us this way in the scripture, and by Christ, it must needs be greatly necessary for us, to sit down at his feet and learn it.

6th. The way of attaining to godliness is so far from being known without learning out of the holy scriptures, that, when it is here plainly revealed, we cannot learn it so easily as the duties of the law ; which are known in part by the light of nature, and therefore the more easily assented to. It is the way whereby the dead are brought to live unto God ; and therefore doubtless it is far above all the thoughts and conjectures of human wisdom. It is the way of salvation, wherein God will "destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent," by discovering things by his Spirit, that "the natural man receiveth not ; for they are foolishness to him neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. i. 19. 31. and ii. 14. "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness," 1 Tim. iii. 16. The learning of it requireth double work ; because we must unlearn many of our former deeply rooted notions, and "become fools, that we may be wise." We must pray earnestly to the Lord to teach us, as well as search the scriptures, that we may get this knowledge. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes ! Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes ; and I shall keep it unto the end," Psal. cxix. 5, 33. "Teach me to do thy will," cxliii. 10. "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God," 2

Thess. iii. 5.—Surely these saints did not so much want teaching and directions concerning the duties of the law to be done, as concerning the way and means whereby they might do them.

7th. The certain knowledge of these powerful and effectual means, is of greatest *importance* and *necessity* for our establishment in the true faith, and avoiding errors contrary thereunto; for we cannot rationally doubt, that the moral duties of love to God and our neighbour, are absolutely necessary to true religion, so that it cannot subsist without them. And, from this principle we may firmly conclude, that nothing repugnant to the practice of these holy duties, ought to be received as a point of faith, delivered to us by the most holy God; and that whatsoever is truly necessary, powerful, and effectual, to bring us to the practice of them, ought to be believed as proceeding from God, because it hath the image of his holiness and righteousness engraven upon it. This is a sure test and touchstone, which those that are seriously religious will use, to try spirits and their doctrines, whether they be of God or no; and they cannot rationally approve any doctrine as religious, that is not according to godliness, 1 Tim. vi. 3. By this touchstone Christ proveth his doctrine to be of God, because therein he seeketh the glory of God, John. vii. 17, 18. And he teacheth us to know false prophets by their fruits, Mat. vii. 15, 16. wherein the fruits which their doctrine tendeth unto, are especially to be considered. Hence it appeareth, that until we know what are the effectual means of holiness, and what not, we want a necessary touchstone of divine truth, and may be easily deceived by false doctrine, or brought to live in mere suspense concerning the truth of any religion, like the seekers. And if you mistake, and think those things to be effectual that are not, and those that are effectual to be weak, or of contrary effect, your error in this will be a false touchstone to try other doctrines, whereby you will readily approve of errors, and refuse the truth; which hath been a pernicious occasion of



many errors in religion in late days.—Get but a true touchstone, by learning this lesson, and you will be able to try the various doctrines of Protestants, Papists, Arminians, Socinians, Antinomians, Quakers: and to discover the truth and cleave to it, with much satisfaction to your judgment, amongst all the janglings and controversies of these times.—Hereby you may discover, whether the Protestant religion, established among us, hath in it any sinews of Antinomianism; whether it be guilty of any insufferable defect in practical principles, and deserves to be altered, and turned almost upside down, with new doctrines and methods; as some learned men, in late times, have judged by their touchstones.

8th. It is also of great importance and necessity for our establishment in *holy practice*; for we cannot apply ourselves to the practice of holiness, with hope of success, except we have some faith concerning the divine assistance; which we have no ground to expect, if we use not such means as God hath appointed to work by. “God meeteth these that remember him in his own ways,” Isa. lxiv. 5. and “makes a breach upon them that seek him not after the due order,” 1 Chron. xv. 13. He hath chosen and ordained such means of sanctification and salvation, as are for his own glory, and those only he blesseth to us; and he crowneth no man that striveth, except he *strive lawfully*, 2 Tim ii. 5.

Experience sheweth plentifully, both of heathens and christians, how pernicious ignorance, or mistaking of these effectual means, is to a holy practice. The heathens generally fell short of an acceptable performance of those duties of the law which they knew, because of their ignorance in this point: 1. Many christians content themselves with external performances because they never knew how they might attain to spiritual service. 2. And many reject the way of holiness as austere and unpleasant, because they knew not how to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, without intolerable pain; whereas they would find “the ways of



wisdom (if they knew them) to be ways of pleasantness and all her paths peace," Prov. iii. 17. This occasioneth the putting off repentance from time to time, as an uncouth thing. 3. Many others set upon the practice of holiness with a fervent zeal, and run very fast; but tread not a step in the right way; and finding themselves frequently disappointed and overcome by their lusts, they at last give over the work, and turn to wallow again in the mire: which hath occasioned several treatises, to shew how far a reprobate may go in the way of religion; whereby many weak saints are discouraged, accounting that these reprobates have gone farther than themselves: whereas most of them never knew the right way, nor trode one step right in it; for, "few there be that find it." Mat. vii. 14. 4. Some of those ignorant zealots do inhumanly macerate their bodies with fasting, and other austerities, to kill their lusts; and, when they see their lusts are still too hard for them, they fall into despair, and are driven by horror of conscience, to make way with themselves wickedly, to the scandal of religion. Peradventure God may bless my discovery of the powerful means of holiness so far, as to save some one or other from killing themselves.— And such a fruit as this would countervail my labour; though I hope, God will enlarge the hearts of many by it, to run with great cheerfulness, joy, and thanksgiving in the ways of his commandments.

## DIRECTION II.

Several Endowments and Qualifications are necessary to enable us for the immediate practice of the Law. Particularly, we must have an inclination and propensity of our hearts thereunto; and therefore we must be well persuaded of our reconciliation with God, and of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness, and of sufficient strength both to will and to perform all duties acceptably, until we come to the enjoyment of that happiness.

## EXPLICATION.

THOSE *means* that are next to the attainment of the grand end aimed at, are first to be discovered, that we may learn how to get them by other means, expressed in the following directions. Therefore I have named here several *qualifications* and *endowments* that are necessary to make up that holy frame and state of the soul, whereby it is furnished and enabled to practise the law immediately, and that not only in the beginning, but in the continuation of that practice. And therefore, note diligently, that these endowments must continue in us during the present life, or else our ability for an holy life will be lost: and they must be before practice, not in any distance of time, but only as the cause is before the effect. I do not say, that I have named particularly all such necessary qualifications; but this much I dare say, that he that gaineth these, may, by the same means, gain any other that should be ranked with them: and this is a matter worthy of our serious consideration; for few understand that any special endowments are required to furnish us for an holy practice, more than for any voluntary actions. The first Adam had excellent endowments bestowed upon him for an holy practice, when he was first created according to the image of God; and the second Adam had endowments more excellent, to enable him for a harder task of obedience. And seeing obedience is grown more difficult, by reason of the opposition and temp-

tations that it meeteth with since the fall of Adam, we that are to be imitators of Christ, had need have very choice endowments, as Christ had ; at least as good or something better than Adam had at first, as our work is harder than his. "What king going to make war against another king sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able, with ten thousand, to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" And shall we dare to rush into battle against all the powers of darkness, all worldly terrors and allurements, and our own inbred domineering corruptions, without considering whether we have sufficient spiritual furniture to stand in the evil day? yet many content themselves with such an ability to will and do their duty, as they would have to be given to men universally; whereby they are no better enabled for the spiritual battle, than the generality of the world, that lie vanquished under the wicked one; and therefore their standing is not at all secured by it. It is a hard matter to find what this universal ability is, that so many contend so earnestly for, of what it consisteth, by what means it is conveyed to us, and maintained.

Bodily agility hath spirits, nerves, ligaments, and bones to subsist by; but this spiritual universal ability seemeth to be some occult quality, that no sufficient account can be given how it is conveyed, or of what it is constituted. That none may deceive themselves, and miscarry in their enterprizes for holiness, by depending on such a weak occult quality, I have here shewed FOUR ENDOWMENTS, of which a true ability, for the practice of holiness, must necessarily be constituted, and by which it must subsist and be maintained; I intend to shew afterwards, by what means they are given to us, and whether the inclination or propensity here mentioned be perfect or imperfect. And they are of such a mysterious nature, that some who own the necessity of endowments, to frame them for holiness, are prone to think, that less than these will serve; and that some of these frame us rather for licentiousness than holi-

ness, as they are here placed before any actual performance of the moral law ; and that some things contrary to them would put us into a better frame for holiness. Against all which surmises, I shall endeavour such a demonstration of these endowments particularly, as may gain the assent of right reason ; insisting on them in the same order wherein I have placed them in the direction.

In the first place, I assert, that an *inclination* and *propensity* of heart, to the duties of the law, is necessary to frame and enable us for the immediate practice of them. And I mean not such a blind propensity as inanimate creatures and brutes have to their natural operations, but such a one as is meet for intelligent creatures, whereby they are, by the conduct of reason, prone and bent to approve and choose their duty, and averse to the practice of sin. And therefore I have intimated, that the three other endowments, mentioned in the direction, are subservient to this as the chief of all, which is sufficient to make it a rational propensity. This is contrary to those, that, out of zeal for obedience, but not according to knowledge, contend so earnestly for free will, as a necessary and sufficient endowment to enable us to perform our duty, when once we are convinced of it, and of our obligation to it ; and who extol this endowment, as the great benefit that universal redemption hath blessed all mankind with ; though they consider this free will without any actual inclination to good ; yea, they cannot but acknowledge that, in most of mankind that have it, it is incumbered with an actual bent and propensity of the heart altogether to evil. Such a free will as this is, can never free us from slavery to sin and Satan, and fit us for the practice of the law ; and therefore is not worthy the pains of those that contend so hotly for it. Neither is the will so free as is necessary for the practice of holiness, until it be endued with an inclination and propensity thereunto ; as may appear by the following arguments.

First, The duties of the law are of such a nature, that they cannot possibly be performed while there is wholly an aversion, or mere indifferency of the heart to the performance of them, and no good inclination and propensity towards the practice of them, because the chief of all the commandments is, to love the Lord with our whole heart, might and soul; to love every thing that is in him; to love his will, and all his ways, and to like them as good. And all duties must be influenced, in their performance, by this love; we must delight to do the will of God; it must be sweeter to us than the honey or honey comb, Psalm xl. 8. Job xxxiii. 2. Psalm lxiii. 1. cxix. 20. and xix. 10. And this love, liking, delight, longing, thirsting, sweet relishing, must be continued to the end; and the first indeliberate motion of lust must be regulated by love to God and our neighbour; and sin must be lusted against, Gal. v. 17. and abhorred, Psalm xxxvi. 4. If it were true obedience (as some would have it) to love our duty only as a market man loveth foul ways to the market, or as a sick man loveth an unpleasant medicinal potion, or as a captive slave loveth his hard work for fear of a greater evil; then it might be performed with averseness, or want of inclination; but we must love it, as the market man gain, as the sick man health, as pleasant meat and drink, as the captive liberty. Doubtless there can be no power in the will for this kind of service, without an agreeableness of our inclination to the will of God, a heart according to his own heart, an aversion of our hearts from sin, and a kind of antipathy against sin; for we know the proverb, "Like loveth like." There must be an agreeableness in the person or thing beloved, to the disposition of the lover. Love to God must flow from a clean heart, 1 Tim. i. 5; a heart cleansed from evil propensities and inclinations. And reason will tell us that the first motions of lust which fall not under our choice and deliberations, cannot be avoided without a fixed propensity of the heart to holiness.

Second, The image of God (wherein God, according to his infinite wisdom, judged it meet to frame the first Adam in righteousness, and true holiness and uprightness, Gen. i. 27. Eph. iv. 24. Eccles. vii. 29.) consisted in an actual bent and propensity of heart to the practice of holiness: not in a mere power of will to choose good or evil; for this in itself, is neither holy nor unholy, but only a ground work, on which either the image of God, or of Satan may be drawn: nor in an indifference of propensity to the choice of sin or duty; for this wicked disposition in an intelligent creature that knoweth his duty, and fitteth us only to halt between God and Baal. God set Adam's soul at first wholly in a right bent and inclination, though Adam might act contrary to it, if he would; as we may be prevailed upon to do some things contrary to our natural inclinations: and it is easy to fail of our duty, though great preparation and furniture be required for the performance of it. The second Adam also, the Lord Jesus Christ, was born an holy thing, Luke i. 35. with a holy disposition of his soul, and propensity to goodness. And can we reasonably hope to arise to the life of holiness, from which the first Adam fell, or to be imitators of Christ, since duty is made so difficult by the fall, if we be not renewed in a measure according to the same image of God, and enabled with such a propensity and inclination?

3d. Original corruption (whereby we are dead to God and godliness from the birth, and made willing slaves to the performance of all actual sins, until the Son of God make us free) consisteth in a propensity and inclination of the heart to sin, and averseness to holiness. Without this propensity to sin, what can that "law of sin in our members be, that wareth against the law of our mind, and leadeth us captive to the service of sin?" Rom. vii. 23. What is that poison in us, for which men may be called serpents, vipers? What is that spirit of whoredoms in men, by reason of which they will not frame their doings to turn to God? Hos. v. 4. How is

the tree first corrupt, and then its fruit corrupt? **Matth. xii. 33.** How can man be said to be abominable and filthy, that drinketh iniquity like water? **Job xv. 16.** How should the mind of the flesh be continual enmity to the law of God? **Rom. xiii. 7.** I know there is also a blindness of understanding, and other things belonging to original corruption, which conduce to this evil propensity of the will; but yet this propensity itself is the great evil, and indwelling sin, which produceth all actual sins; and must of necessity be removed or restrained, by restoring the contrary inclination, wherein the image of God consisteth; or else we shall be backward and reprobate to every good work, and whatever freedom the will hath, it shall be employed only in the service of sin.

Fourth. God restoreth his people to holiness, by giving to them “a new heart, and a new spirit, and taking away the heart of stone out of their flesh, and giving them an heart of flesh,” **Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27**; and he circumciseth their heart to love him with their whole heart and soul. And he requireth, that we should be transformed “in the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is his acceptable will,” **Rom. xii. 2.** and **David** prayeth for the same end, “that God would create in him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him,” **Psal. li. 10.** If any one can judge, that this new, clean, circumcised heart, this heart of flesh, this new right spirit, is such a one as hath no actual inclination and propensity to good, but only a power to choose good or evil, undeservedly called a free-will, with a present inclination to evil, or an indifference of propensity to both contraries, it will not be worth my labour to convince such a judgment: only let him consider, whether **David** could account such a heart to be clean and right when he prayed, **Psal. cxix. 36.** “Incline mine heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.”

The SECOND ENDOWMENT necessary to enable us for the immediate practice of holiness, and concurring



with the two others that follow, to work in us a rational propensity to this practice, is that we be well persuaded of our reconciliation with God. We must reckon, that the breach of amity which sin hath made between God and us, is made up by a firm reconciliation to his love and favour. And herein I include the great benefit of justification, as the means whereby we are reconciled to God, which as described in scripture, either by *forgiving our sins*, or by the *imputation of righteousness* to us, Rom. iv. 5, 6, 7. because both are contained in one and the same justifying act ; as one act of illumination comprehends expulsion of darkness, and introduction of light, one act of repentance containeth mortification of sin, and vivification to righteousness ; and every motion from any thing to its contrary, is but one and the same, though it may be expressed by divers names, with respect either to the two contrary terms, the one of which is abolished, the other introduced by it. This is a great mystery (contrary to the apprehensions, not only of the vulgar, but of some learned divines) that we must be reconciled to God, and justified by the remission of our sins, and imputation of righteousness, before any sincere obedience to the law ; that we may be enabled for the practice of it. They account, that this doctrine tendeth to the subversion of a holy practice, and is a great pillar of Antinomianism ; and that the only way to establish sincere obedience, is to make it rather a *condition* to be performed before all actual justification, and reconciliation with God. Therefore some late divines have thought fit to bring the doctrine of former Protestants concerning justification to their anvil, and to hammer it into another form, that it might be more free from Antinomianism, and effectually to secure a holy practice. But their labour is vain and pernicious, tending to Antinomian profaneness, or painted hypocrisy at best ; neither can the true practice of holiness be secure, except the persuasion of our justification and reconciliation with God, be first obtained without the works of the law, that we may be enabled thereby to do



them, as I shall now prove by several arguments : intending also to shew, in the following directions, that such a persuasion of the love of God, as God giveth to his people, tendeth only to holiness, though a mispersuasion of it be, in many, an occasion of licentiousness.

First. When the first Adam was framed for the practice of holiness at his creation, he was highly in the favour of God, and had no sin imputed to him, and he was accounted righteous in the sight of God, according to his present state ; because he was made upright according to God's image. And there is no reason to doubt but that these qualifications were his advantage for a holy practice, and the wisdom of God judged them good for that end : and, as soon as he lost them, he became dead in sin. The second Adam also, in our nature, was the beloved of the Father, accounted righteous in the sight of God, without the imputation of any sin to him, except what his office was to bear on the behalf of others. And can we reasonably expect to be imitators of Christ, by performing more difficult obedience than the first Adam's was before the fall ; except the like advantages be given to us, by reconciliation and remission of sins, and imputation of a righteousness given by God to us, when we have none of our own ?

Second. Those that know their natural deadness under the power of sin and Satan, are fully convinced, that if God leave them to their own hearts, they can do nothing but sin ; and that they can do no good work, except it please God, of his great love and mercy, to work it in them, John viii. 36. Phil. ii. 13. Rom. viii. 7, 8. Therefore, that they may be encouraged and rationally inclined to holiness, they must hope that God will work savingly in them. Now, I leave it to considerate men to judge, whether such a hope can be well grounded, without a good persuasion of such a reconciliation and saving love of God to us, as depends not upon any precedent goodness of our works, but is a cause sufficient to produce them effectually in us ? Yea, we know further (if we know ourselves sufficiently) that

our death in sin proceeded from the guilt of the first sin of Adam, and the sentence denounced against it, Gen. ii. 17. and that it is still maintained in us by the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law ; and that spiritual life will never be given us, to free us from that dominion, except this guilt and curse be removed from us ; which is done by actual justification, Gal. iii. 13, 14. Rom. vi. 14. And this is sufficient to make us despair of living to God in holiness, while we apprehend ourselves to be under the curse and wrath of God, by reason of our transgressions and sins still lying upon us, Ezek. xxxiii. 10.

Third. The nature of the duties of the law is such, as requireth an apprehension of our reconciliation with God, and his hearty love and favour towards us for the doing of them. The great duty is love to God with their whole heart, and not such a contemplative love as philosophers may have to the object of sciences, which they are concerned in no further than to please their fancies in the knowledge of them ; but a practical love, whereby we are willing that God should be absolute Lord and governor over us and all the world, to dispose in us and all others according to his will, as to our temporal and everlasting condition, and that he should be the only portion and happiness of all those that are happy ; a love whereby we like every thing in him as he is our Lord ; his justice as well as any other attribute, without wishing or desiring that he were better than he is ; and whereby we desire that his will be done upon us, and all others, whether prosperity or adversity, life or death ; and whereby we can heartily praise him for all things, and delight in our obedience to him, in doing his will, though we suffer that which is ever so grievous to us, even present death. Consider these things well, and you may easily perceive, that our spirits are not in a fit frame for the doing of them, while we apprehend ourselves under the curse and wrath of God, or while we are under prevailing suspicions that God will prove an enemy to us at last. Slavish fear

may extort some slavish hypocritical performances from us, such as that of Pharaoh in letting the Israelites go, sore against his will: but the duty of love cannot be extorted and forced by fear, but it must be won, and sweetly allured by an apprehension of God's love and goodness towards us; as that eminent, loving, and beloved disciple testifieth, 1 John iv. 18, 19. "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us." Observe here, that we cannot be beforehand with God in loving him, before we apprehend his love to us. And consult your own experience, if you have any true love to God, whether it were not wrought in you by a sense of God's love first towards you? All the goodness and excellency of God cannot render him an amiable object to us, except we apprehend him an agreeable good to us. I question not but the Devils know the excellency of God's nature, as well as our greatest metaphysical speculators; and this doth but fill them the more with tormenting horror and trembling, that is contrary to love, James ii. 19. The greater God's excellency and perfection is, the greater evil he is to us, if he hate us and curse us. And therefore the principle of self-preservation deeply rooted in our natures, hindereth us from loving that which we apprehend as our destruction. If a man be any enemy to us, we can love him for the sake of our loving reconciled God, because his love will make man's hatred to work for our good; but if God himself be our enemy, for whose sake can we love him? who is there that can free us from the evil of his enmity and turn it to our advantage, until he be pleased to reconcile himself to us?

Fourth. Our conscience must of necessity be first purged from dead works, that we may serve the living God. And this is done by actual remission of sin, procured by the blood of Christ, and manifested to our consciences, as appeared by Christ's dying for this end, Heb. ix. 14, 15, and x. 1, 2, 14, 17, 22. That conscience

whereby we judge ourselves to be under the guilt of sin, and the wrath of God, is accounted an evil conscience in scripture, though it perform its office truly; because it is caused by the evil of sin, and will itself be a cause of our committing more sin, until it can judge us to be justified from all sin, and received into the favour of God. Love, which is the end of the law, must proceed from a good conscience, as well as from any other cleanness of heart, 1 Tim. i. 5. David's mouth could not be opened to shew forth the praise of God, until he was delivered from blood guiltiness, Psal. li. 14, 15. This evil, guilty conscience, whereby we judge that God is our enemy, and that his justice is against us to our everlasting condemnation, by reason of our sins, doth strongly maintain and increase the dominion of sin and Satan in us, and working most mischievous effects in the soul against godliness, even to bring the soul to hate God, and to wish there were no God, no heaven, no hell, so we might escape the punishment due to us. It so disaffecteth people toward God, that they cannot endure to think, or speak, or hear of him and his law; but strive rather to put him out of their minds, by fleshly pleasures and worldly employments. And thus they are alienated from all true religion, only blinding it and stopping the mouth of it. It produceth zeal in many outside religious performances, and also false religion, idolatry and the most inhuman superstition in the world. I have often considered, by what manner of working any sin could effectually destroy the whole image of God in the first Adam; and I conclude, it was by working first an evil guilty conscience in him, whereby he judged that the just God was against him, and cursed him for that one sin. And this was enough to work a shameful nakedness by disorderly lusts, a turning his love wholly from God to the creature, and a desire to be hidden from the presence of God, Gen. iii. 8, 10, which was a total destruction of the image of God's holiness. And we have cause to judge, that from the same cause proceedeth the conti-

nual malice, rancour, rage and blasphemy of the Devil, and many notorious wicked men, against God and godliness. Some may think Job uncharitable in suspecting, not merely that his sons had sinned, but that they had been so abominably wicked as to curse God in their hearts, Job i. 5. But Job well understood, that if the guilt of any ordinary sin lies upon the conscience, it will make the soul to wish secretly, that God was not, or that he were not so just a judge; which is a secret cursing of God; that cannot be avoided, until our conscience be purged from the guilt of sin, by the offering of Christ for us, which was then figured out by the burnt-offering of Job for his sons. *Job i. 5.*

Fifth. God hath abundantly discovered to us, in his word, that his method in bringing men from sin to holiness of life, is, first to make them know that he loveth them, and that their sins are blotted out. When he gave the ten commandments on mount Sinai, he first discovered himself to be their God, that had given them a sure pledge of his salvation, by their delivery from Egypt, in the preface, *Exod. xx. 2.* And during all the time of the Old Testament, God was pleased to make the entrance into religion to be by circumcision; which was not only a sign, but also a seal of the righteousness of faith, whereby God justifieth people, while they are considered as ungodly, *Rom. iv. 11, 15.* And this seal was administered to children of eight days old, before they could perform any condition of sincere obedience, for their justification, that their furniture for a holy practice might be ready beforehand. Furthermore, in the time of the Old Testament, God appointed divers washings, and the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, to prepare and sanctify them for other parts of his worship in his tabernacle and temple: to figure out his purging their consciences from dead works by the blood of Christ, that they might serve the living God, *Heb. ix. 10, 13, 14, 22.* This, I say, was then figurative sanctification, as the word sanctification is taken

in a large sense, comprehending all things that prepare us for the service of God, chiefly the remission of sin, Heb. x. 10, 14, 18. Though if it be taken in a strict sense, respecting only our conformity to the law, it must necessarily be placed after justification, according to the usual method of Protestant divines. God also minded them of the necessity of purging away their guilt first, that their service might be acceptable, by commanding them to offer the sin-offering before the burnt-offering, Lev. v. 8. and xvi. 3, 11. And lest the guilt of their sins should pollute the service of God, notwithstanding all their particular expiations, God was pleased to appoint a general atonement for all their sins one day every year, wherein the scape-goat was "to bear upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited," Lev. xvi. 22, 34. Under the New Testament God useth the same method, in loving us first, and washing us from our sins by the blood of Christ, that he may make us priests, to offer the sacrifices of praise, and all good works to God, even the Father. He entereth us into his service, by washing away our sins in baptism: he feedeth and strengtheneth us for his service by remission of sins, given to us in the blood of Christ at the Lord's supper: he exhorteth us to obey him, because he hath already loved us, and our sins are already pardoned. "Forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children: and walk in love, as Christ hath loved us," Eph. iv. 32. and v. 1, 2. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," 1 Jo. ii. 12, 15. I might quote abundance of texts of the same nature. We may clearly see by all this, that God hath accounted it a matter of great importance, and hath condescended to take wonderful care in providing plentiful means, both under the Old and New Testament, that his people might be first cleansed from guilt and reconciled to himself, to fit

them for the acceptable practice of holiness. Away then with all the contrary methods of the new divinity.

The THIRD ENDOWMENT necessary to enable us for the practice of holiness, without which, a persuasion of our reconciliation with God would be of little efficacy to work in us a rational propensity to it, is, that we be persuaded of our future enjoyment of the everlasting heavenly happiness. This must precede our holy practice as a cause disposing and alluring us to it. This assertion hath several sorts of adversaries to oppose it. Some account, that a persuasion of our own future happiness, before we have persevered in sincere obedience, tendeth to licentiousness; and that the way to do good works, is rather to make them a condition necessary for the procuring of this persuasion. Others condemn all works that we are allured or stirred up to by the future enjoyment of the heavenly happiness, as legal, mercenary, flowing from self-love, and not from any pure love to God; and they figure out sincere godliness by a man bearing fire in one hand, to burn up heaven, and water in the other to quench hell; intimating, that the true service of God must not proceed at all from hope of reward, or fear of punishment, but only from love. To establish the truth asserted, against the errors that are so contrary to it, and to each other, I shall propose the ensuing considerations.

1. The nature of the duties of the law, is such, that they cannot be sincerely and universally practised without this endowment. That this endowment must be present in us, is sufficiently proved already, by all that I have said concerning the necessity of the persuasion of our firm reconciliation with God by our justification, to prepare us for this practice; because that includeth a persuasion of this future happiness, or else it is of little worth. All that I have to add here, is, that sincere obedience cannot rationally subsist, except it be allured, encouraged, and supported by this persuasion. Let me therefore, suppose a Sadducee believing no happiness after this life, and put the question, *can such a one love*



*God with his whole heart, might, and soul?* Will he not think it reasonable, rather to lessen and moderate his love towards God, lest he should be over much troubled to part with him by death? We account it most reasonable to sit loose in our affections from things that we must part with. Can such a one be satisfied with the enjoyment of God as his happiness? will he not rather account, that the enjoyment of God and all religious duties, are vanities as well as other things; because in a little time we shall have no more benefit by them, than if they had never been? How can such a one be willing to lay down his life for the sake of God, when, by his death, he must part with God, as well as with other things? How can he willingly choose afflictions rather than sin, when he shall be more miserable in this life for it, and not at all happy hereafter? I grant, if afflictions come unavoidably upon such a person, he may reasonably judge, that patience is better for him than impatience; but it will displease him, that he is forced to the use of such a virtue, and he will be prone to fret and murmur at his creator, and to wish he had never been, rather than to endure such miseries, and to be comforted only with vain transitory enjoyments. I think I have said enough to shew how unfurnished such a man is for holiness. And that he will burn up heaven, and quench hell, that he may serve God out of love, doth thereby leave himself little better furnished than the Sadducee. The one denieth them, the other will not have them at all to be considered in this case.

2. The sure hope of the glory of heaven, is made use of ordinarily by God since the fall of Adam, as an encouragement to the practice of holiness, as the scripture doth abundantly shew. Christ, the great pattern of holiness, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame," Heb. xii. 2.—And though I cannot say, that the first Adam had such a sure hope, to preserve him in innocency; yet he had instead of it, the present possession of an earthly pa-



radise, and a happy estate in it, which he knew would last, if he continued in holiness, or be changed into a better happiness. 'The apostles did not faint under affliction, because they knew that it wrought for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. 'The believing Hebrews "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance," Heb. x. 34. 'The apostle Paul accounts all his sufferings unprofitable, were it not for a glorious resurrection; and that christians would be of all men most miserable, and that the doctrine of the epicures were rather to be chosen; "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." And he exorts the Corinthians to be "abundant in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58. As worldly hope keepeth the world at work in their various employments; for God giveth his people the hope of his glory, to keep them close to his service, Heb. vi. 11, 12. 1 John, iii. 3. And it is such a sure hope as shall never make them ashamed, Rom. v. 5. Those that think it below the excellency of their love, to work from a hope of a heavenly reward, do thereby advance their love beyond the love of the apostles and primitive saints, and even of Christ himself.

3. This persuasion of our future enjoyment of everlasting happiness cannot tend to licentiousness, if we understand well, that perfect holiness is a necessary part of that happiness, and that though we have but a title to that happiness by free justification and adoption, yet we must go to the possession of it in a way of holiness, 1 John iii. 1, 2, 3. Neither is it legal or mercenary, to be moved by this persuasion; seeing the persuasion itself is not gotten by the works of the law, but by free grace through faith, Gal. v. 5. And if it be a working from self-love; yet, for certain, it is not that carnal self-love which the scripture condemneth as the mother of sinfulness, 2 Tim. iii. 2; but a holy

self-love, inclining us to prefer God above the flesh and the word, such as God directeth us unto, when he exhorteth us to save ourselves, Acts ii. 40. 1 Tim. iv. 16. And it is so far from being contrary to the pure love of God, that it brings us to love God more purely and entirely. The more good and beneficial we apprehend God to us to all eternity, doubtless the more lovely God will be to us, and our affections will be the more inflamed towards him. God will not be loved as a barren wilderness, a land of darkness to us, neither will he be served for nought, Jer. ii. 31. Isa. xiv. 19. He would think it a dishonour to him to be owned by us as our God, if he had not prepared for us a city, Heb. xi. 16. And he draweth us to love him by the cords of a man, such cords as the love of man useth to be drawn by, even by his own love to us, in laying his benefits before us, Hos. xi. 4. Therefore, the way for us to keep ourselves in the love of God is to look for his mercy unto eternal life, Jude verse 21.

The LAST ENDOWMENT, for the same end as the former, is, that we will be *persuaded of sufficient strength* both to will and perform our duty acceptably, until we come to the enjoyment of the heavenly happiness.—This is contrary to the error of those that account it sufficient, if we have strength to practise holiness, if we will, or to will it, if we please; and this is sufficient strength which they earnestly contend for, as a great benefit bestowed on all mankind by universal redemption. It is also contrary to the error of those that think the practice of godliness and wickedness to be alike easy, excepting only some difficulty in the first alterations of vicious customs, and in bearing persecutions, which they account to be a rare case; since the kingdoms of the world have been brought to the profession of christianity: or that think that God requireth of men only to do their endeavour, that is what they can do; and it is nonsense to say they cannot do what they can do. According to their judgment, it is needless to concern ourselves much about sufficient strength for

holy practice. For the confirmation of the assertion, against those errors, take these arguments.

1. We are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, unable to will or to do any thing that is spiritually good, notwithstanding the redemption that is by Christ until we be actually quickened by Christ, Eph. ii. 1. Rom. viii. 7, 8, 9. Those that are sufficiently enlightened and humbled, know themselves to be naturally in this case; and that they do not only want executive power to do good, but chiefly a heart to will it, and to be pleased with it; and that if God work it not in them both to will and to do, they shall neither will nor do any thing pleasing to him, Phil. ii. 13; and that, if we leave them to their own corruption, after he hath begun the good work, they shall certainly prove vile apostates; and their latter end will be worse than their beginning. We may conclude from hence, that whosoever can courageously attempt the practice of the law, without being well persuaded of a sufficient power whereby he may be enabled to be heartily willing, as well as to perform when he is willing, until he hath gone through the whole work of obedience acceptably: such a one was never yet truly humbled and brought to know the plague of his own heart; neither doth he truly believe the doctrine of original sin, whatsoever formal profession he makes of it.

2. Those that think sincere conformity to the law, in ordinary cases, to be so very easy, shew that they neither know it nor themselves. Is it an easy thing to wrestle, not against *flesh* only, but "against principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness in high places?" Eph. vi. 12. Is it an easy thing not to lust or covet according to the tenth commandment? The apostle Paul found it so difficult to obey this commandment, that his *concupiscence* prevailed the more by occasion of the commandment, Rom. vii. 7, 8. Our work is not only to alter vicious customs, but to mortify corrupt natural affections, which bred those customs; and not only to deny the fulfilling of sinful lusts;

but to be full of holy love and desires : yet even the restraining the execution of corrupt lusts, and crossing them by contrary actings, is, in many cases, like "the cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye," Mat. v. 29, 30. If obedience be so easy, how came it to pass that the heathens generally did those things, for which their own consciences condemned them as worthy of death? Rom. i. 32; and that many among us seek to enter into this "strait gate, and are not able," Luke xiii. 24; and break so many vows and purposes of obedience, and fall back to the practice of their lusts, though, in the mean time, the fears of eternal damnation press hard upon their consciences?

As to those that find persecution for religion to be so rare a thing, in late days, they have cause to be suspected that they are of the world, and therefore the world loveth its own; else they would find the national profession of religion will not secure those that are truly godly from several sorts of persecutions. And suppose men do not persecute us for religion, yet there is great difficulty in bearing great injuries from men on other accounts, and losses, poverty, bodily pains, long diseases, and untimely deaths, from the ordinary providence of God, with such hearty love to God, and to injurious men for his sake, and such a patient acquiescence in his will, as the law of God requireth. I acknowledge that the work of God is easy and pleasant to those whom God rightly furnisheth with endowments for it; but those that assert it to be easy to men, in their common condition, shew their imprudence in contradicting the general experience of heathens and christians. Though many duties do not require much labour of body or mind, and might be done with ease, if we were willing, yet it is easier to remove a mountain, than to move and incline the heart to will and affect the doing of them. I need not concern myself with those that account that all have sufficient strength for a holy practice, because they can do their endeavour, that is, what they can do; for God requireth ac-

tual fulfilling of his commands. What, if by our endeavours we can do nothing in any measure according to the rule, shall the law be put off with no performance? and shall such endeavours be accounted sufficient holiness? And what if we cannot so much as endeavour in a right way? If a man's ability were the measure of acceptable duty, the commands of the law would signify very little.

3. The wisdom of God hath ever furnished people with a good persuasion of a sufficient strength, that they might be enabled both to will and to do their duty. The first Adam was furnished with such a strength; and we have no cause to think that he was ignorant of it, or that he needed to fear that he should be left to his own corruptions, because he had them not in him, until he produced them in himself, by sinning against strength: and when he had lost that strength, he could not recover the practice of holiness, until he was acquainted with a better strength, whereby the head of Satan should be bruised, Gen. iii. 15. Our Lord Christ, doubtless, knew the infinite power of his Deity to enable him for all that he was to do and suffer in our nature. He knew the Lord God would help him, "therefore he should not be confounded," Isa. i. 7. The scripture assureth what plentiful assurance of strength God gave to Moses, Joshua, Gideon, when he called them to great employments: and to the Israelites, when he called them to subdue the land of Canaan. Christ would have the sons of Zébedee to consider, whether they were able "to drink of his cup, and to be baptized with the baptism that he was to be baptized with," Mat. xx. 22. Paul encourageth believers to the life of holiness, by persuading them that sin shall not prevail to get the dominion over them, because "they are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. iv. 13, 14. And he exhorteth them to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil," Eph. vi. 10, 11. John exhorteth believers, "not to love the world, nor

the things of the world," because they were "strong, and had overcome the wicked one," 1 John ii. 14, 15.

They that were called of God, heretofore, to work miracles, were first acquainted with the gift of power to work them; and no wise man will attempt to do them, without knowledge of the gift: even so, when men that are dead in sin are called to do the works of a holy life, which are in them great miracles, God maketh a discovery of the gift of power unto them, that he may encourage them, in a rational way, to such a wonderful enterprize.

### DIRECTION III.

The way to get holy endowments and qualifications necessary to frame and enable us for the immediate practice of the law, is to receive them out of the fulness of Christ, by fellowship with him: and that we may have this fellowship, we must be in Christ, and have Christ himself in us, by a mystical union with him.

### EXPLICATION.

HERE, as much as any where, we have great cause to acknowledge with the apostle, that, "*without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness,*" even so great, that it could not have entered into the heart of man to conceive of it, if God had not made it known, in the gospel, by supernatural revelation. Yea, though it be revealed clearly in the holy scriptures, yet the natural man hath not eyes to see it there, for it is foolishness to him; and, if God express it ever so plainly and properly, he will think that God is speaking riddles and parables. And I doubt not but it is still a riddle and parable, even to many truly godly, that have received a holy nature in this way; for the apostles themselves had not the saving benefit of it, before the comforter discovered it clearly to them, John xiv. 20. And they walked in Christ, as the way to the father, before

they clearly knew him to be the way, John xiv. 5.— And the best of us know it but in part, and must wait for a perfect knowledge of it in another world.

One great mystery is, that the holy frame and disposition whereby our souls are furnished and enabled for immediate practice of the law, must be obtained *by receiving it out of Christ's fulness*, as a thing already prepared and brought to an existence for us in Christ, and treasured up in him; and that as we are justified by a righteousness wrought out in Christ, and imputed to us; so we are sanctified by such a holy frame and qualifications as are first wrought out and completed in Christ for us, and then imputed to us. And as our natural corruption was produced originally in the first Adam, and propagated from him to us; so, our new nature and holiness is first produced in Christ, and derived from him to us, or as it were propagated. So that we are not all to work together with Christ, in making or producing that holy frame in us, but only to take it to ourselves, and use it in our holy practice, as made ready to our hands. Thus we have fellowship with Christ, in receiving that holy frame of spirit that was originally in him: for fellowship is, when several persons have the same thing in common, 1 John i. 1, 2, 3. This mystery is so great, that notwithstanding all the light of the gospel, we commonly think that we must get a holy frame by producing it anew in ourselves, and by forming and working it out of our own hearts. Therefore many that are seriously devout, take a great deal of pains to mortify their corrupt nature, and beget an holy frame of heart in themselves, by striving earnestly to master their sinful lusts, and by pressing vehemently upon their hearts many motives to godliness, labouring importunately to squeeze good qualifications out of them, as oil out of a flint. They account, that though they be justified by a righteousness wrought out by Christ, yet they must be sanctified by a holiness wrought out by themselves.— And though out of humility, they are willing to call it



*infused grace*, yet they think they must get the infusion of it by the same manner of working, as if it were wholly acquired by their own endeavours. On this account they acknowledge the entrance into a gaudy life to be harsh and unpleasing, because it costs so much struggling with their own hearts and affections, to new frame them. If they knew that this way of entrance is not only harsh and unpleasant, but altogether impossible; and that the true way of mortifying sin, and quickening themselves to holiness, is by receiving a new nature out of the fulness of Christ; and that we do more to the production of a new nature, than of original sin, though we do more to the reception of it; if they knew this, they might save themselves many a bitter agony, and a great deal of mis-spent burdensome labour, and employ their endeavours to enter in at the strait gate, in such a way as would be more pleasant and successful.

Another great mystery in the way of sanctification, is, the glorious manner of our *fellowship with Christ*, in receiving a holy frame of heart from him. It is by our being in Christ, and having Christ himself in us; and that not merely by this universal presence as he is God, but by such a close union, as that we are *one spirit* and *one flesh* with him; which is a privilege peculiar to those that are truly sanctified. I may well call this a *mystical union*, because the apostle calleth it a *great mystery*, is an epistle full of mysteries, Eph. v. 22; intimating, that it is eminently great above many other mysteries. It is one of the three mystical unions that are the chief mysteries in religion. The other two are, the union of the trinity of persons in one godhead, and the union of the divine and human natures in one person, Jesus Christ, God and man.— Though we cannot frame an exact idea of the manner of any of these three unions in our imaginations, because the depth of these mysteries is beyond our comprehension; yet we have cause to believe them all, because they are clearly revealed in scripture, and are a



necessary foundation for other points of Christian doctrine. Particularly, this union between Christ and believers, is plain in several places of scripture, affirming that Christ is, and “dwelleth in believers, and they in him,” John vi. 56. and xiv. 20; and that they are so joined together as to become *one spirit*, 1 Cor. vi. 17; and that believers are “members of Christ’s body, of his flesh, and of his bones, and they two, Christ and the church, are one flesh,” Eph. v. 30, 31.

Furthermore, this union is illustrated in scripture by various resemblances, which would be very much unlike the things which they are made use of to resemble, and would rather seem to beguile us by obscuring the truth, than instruct us by illustrating of it, if there were no true proper union between Christ and believers. It is resembled by the union between *God the Father* and *Christ*, John xiv. 20. and xvii. 21, 22, 23; between the *vine* and its *branches*, John xv. 4, 5; between the *head* and *body*, Eph. i. 22, 23; between *bread* and the *eater*, John vi. 51, 53, 54. It is not only *resembled*, but *sealed in the Lord’s supper*; where neither the Popish transubstantiation, nor the Lutherans consubstantiation, nor the Protestants spiritual presence of Christ’s body and blood, to the true receivers, can stand without it. And if we can imagine that Christ’s body and blood are not truly eaten and drank by believers, either spiritually or corporally, we shall make the bread and wine joined with the words of institution, not only naked signs, but such signs as are much more apt to breed false notions in us, than to establish us in the truth. And there is nothing in this union so impossible, or repugnant to reason, as may force us to depart from the plain and familiar sense of those scriptures that express and illustrate it. Though Christ be in heaven, and we on earth, yet he can join our souls and bodies to his at such a distance, without any substantial change of either, by the same infinite Spirit dwelling in him and us; and so our flesh will become his, when it is quickened by his Spirit, and his flesh ours, as

truly as if we did eat his flesh and drink his blood ; and he will be in us himself by his Spirit, who is one with him, and who can unite more closely to Christ than any material substance can do, or who can make a more close and intimate union between Christ and us. And it will not follow from hence, that a believer is one person with Christ, any more than that Christ is one person with the Father, by that great mystical union. Neither will a believer be hereby made God, but only the temple of God, as Christ's body and soul are ; and the Spirit's lively instrument, rather than the principal cause. Neither will a believer be necessarily perfect in holiness hereby ; or Christ made a sinner : for Christ knoweth how to dwell in believers by certain measures and degrees, and to make them holy so far only as he dwelleth in them. And though this union seem too high a preferment for such unworthy creatures as we are, yet, considering the preciousness of the blood of God, whereby we are redeemed, we should dishonour God, if we should not expect a miraculous advancement to the highest dignity that creatures are capable of, through the merits of that blood. Neither is there any thing in this union, contrary to the judgment of sense, because the bond of the union being spiritual, falleth not at all under the judgment of sense.

Several learned men of late acknowledge no other union between Christ and believers, than such as persons or things wholly separated, may have by their mutual relations to each other ; and accordingly they interpret the places of scripture that speak of this union. When Christ is called *the head of the church*, they account, that a political head or governor is the thing meant. When Christ is said to be *in his people*, and *they in him*, they think that the proper meaning is, that Christ's law, doctrine, grace, salvation, or that godliness is in them, and embraced by them : so that Christ here must not be taken for Christ himself, but for some other thing wrought in them by Christ. When Christ and believers are said to be *one spirit*, and *one flesh*, they

understand it of the agreement of their minds and affections : as if the greatest of the mystery of this union, mentioned, Eph. v. 32. consisted rather in a harsh trope, or a dark improper expression, than in the depth and abstruseness of the thing itself ; and if Christ and his apostles had affected obscure intricate expressions, when they speak to the church of things very plain, and easy to be understood. Thus that great mystery, the union of believers with Christ himself, which is the glory of the church, and hath been highly owned formerly, both by antient fathers and many eminent protestant divines, particularly writers concerning the doctrine of the Lord's supper, and by a very general consent of the church in many ages, is now exploded out of the new model of divinity. The reason of exploding it, as I judge in charity, is not, because of our learned refiners of divinity think themselves less able to defend it, than the other two mysterious unions, and to silence the objections of those proud sophisters, that will not believe what they cannot comprehend ; but rather, because they account it to be one of the sinews of antinomianism, that lay unobserved in the former usual doctrine ; that it tendeth to puff up men with a persuasion, that they are justified and have eternal life in them already, and that they need not depend any longer upon their uncertain performances of the condition of sincere obedience for salvation : whereby they account the very foundation of a holy practice to be subverted. But the wisdom of God hath laid another manner of foundation for a holy practice than they imagine, of which this union (which the builders refuse) is a principal stone, next to the head of the corner. And in opposition to their corrupt glosses upon the scriptures that prove it, I assert, that our union with Christ is the cause of our subjection to Christ as a political head in all things, and of the abiding of his law, doctrine, grace, salvation and all godliness in us, and of our agreement with him in our mind and affections ; and therefore it cannot be altogether the same

thing with them. And this assertion is useful for a better understanding of the excellency of this union. It is not a privilege procured by our sincere obedience and holiness, as some may imagine, or a reward of good works, reserved for us in another world; but it is a privilege bestowed upon believers in their very first entrance into a holy state, on which all ability to do good works doth depend, and all sincere obedience to the law doth follow after it, as fruit produced by it.

Having thus far explained the direction, I shall now shew, that though the truth contained in it be above the reach of natural reason, yet it is evidently discovered to those that have their understandings opened, to discern that supernatural revelation of the mysterious way of sanctification which God hath given to us in the holy scriptures.

1. There are several places in scripture that do plainly express it. Some texts shew "that all things pertaining to our salvation, are treasured up for us in Christ, and comprehended in his fulness;" so that we must have them thence, or not at all, Col. i. 9. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." And in the same epistle, Col. ii. 11, 12, 13, the apostle sheweth that the holy nature, whereby we live to God, was first produced in us by his death and resurrection. "In whom also ye are circumcised in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh: buried with him, quickened together with him, when you were dead in your sins." Eph. i. 3. "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." A holy frame of spirit, with all its necessary qualifications, must needs be comprehended herein, *in all spiritual blessings*: and these are given us in Christ's person in heavenly places, as prepared and treasured up in him for us while we are upon earth: and therefore we must have our holy endowments out of him, or not at all. In this text some choose rather to read *heavenly things*, as in the margin, because neither places nor things are expressed in the original; but the former textual reading is to be prefer-

red before the marginal, as being the proper sense of the original Greek phrase, which is, and must necessarily be so rendered in two other places of this same epistle, chap. iii. 10, and vi. 12. Another text is, 1 Cor. i. 30, which sheweth that "Christ is of God made unto us sanctification," by which we are able to walk holily; as well as wisdom, by the the knowledge of which we are savingly wise; and righteousness, by the imputation of which we are justified; and redemption, whereby we are redeemed from all misery to the enjoyment of his glory, as our happiness in the heavenly kingdom. Other texts of scripture shew plainly, that we receive our holiness out of his fulness by fellowship with him: John i. 16, 17. "Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace." And it is understood of grace answerable to the law given by Moses, which must needs include the grace of sanctification: 1 John i. 3, 5, 6, 7. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. God is light. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Hence we may infer, that our fellowship with God and Christ, doth include particularly our having light, and walk in it holily and righteously. There are other texts that reach the proof of the whole direction fully; shewing not only that our holy endowments are made ready first in Christ for us, and received from Christ: but that we receive them by union with Christ, Col. iii. 10, 11. "Ye have put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of him that created him; where Christ is all and in all. 1 Cor. vi. 17. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Gal. ii. 20. I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. 1 John v. 11, 12. This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." Can we desire that God should more clearly teach us, that all the fulness of the new man is in Christ, and all that spiritual nature and life whereby we live to God in holiness, and that they are

fixed in him so inseparably, that we cannot have them except we be joined to him, and have himself abiding in us? Take heed, lest through prejudice and hardness of heart, you be guilty of making God a liar, in not believing this eminent record that God hath given to us of his Son.

2. God is pleased to illustrate this mysterious manner of our sanctification, by such a variety of *similitudes* and *resemblances*, as may put us out of doubt that it is truth, and such a truth as we are highly concerned to know and believe. I shall endeavour to contract the chief of these resemblances, and the force of them, briefly into one sentence; leaving it to those that are spiritual to enlarge their meditation upon them. We receive from Christ a new holy frame and nature, whereby we are enabled for a holy practice, by union and fellowship with him, in like manner. 1. As Christ lived in our nature by the Father, John vi. 57. 2. As we receive original sin and death propagated to us from the first Adam, Rom. v. 12, 14, 16, 17. 3. As the natural body receiveth sense, motion and nourishment, from the head, Col. ii. 16. 4. As the branch receiveth its sap, juice and fructifying virtue from the vine, John xv. 4, 5. 5. As the wife bringeth forth fruit by virtue of her conjugal union with her husband, Rom. vii. 4. 6. As stones become a holy temple, by being built upon the foundation, and joined with the chief corner-stone, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5, 6. 7. As we receive the nourishing virtue of bread by eating it, and of wine, by drinking it, John vi. 51, 55, 57; which last resemblance is used to seal to us our communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper. Here are seven resemblances instanced, whereof some do illustrate the mystery spoken of more fully than others: all of them do someway intimate, that our new life and holy nature are first in Christ, and then in us, by a true proper union and fellowship with him. If any should urge, that the similitude of Adam and his seed, and of married couples, do make rather for a relative than a real union betwixt Christ and us: let them

consider, that all nations are really made of one blood, which was first in Adam, Acts xvii. 26 ; and that the first woman was made out of the body of Adam, and was really bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. And by this first married couple, the mystical union of Christ and his church, is eminently resembled, Gen. ii. 20, 23, 24. Eph. v. 30, 31, 32. And yet it supposeth both these resemblances in the nearness and fullness of them ; because those that are joined to the Lord, are not only *one flesh*, but *one spirit* with him.

3. The *end* of Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection, was to prepare and form a holy nature and frame for us in himself, to be communicated to us by union and fellowship with him ; and not to enable us to produce in ourselves the first original of such a holy nature by our own endeavours.

1. By his *incarnation*, there was a man created in a new holy frame, after the holiness of the first Adam's frame had been marred and abolished by the first transgression : and this new frame was far more excellent than ever the first Adam's was ; because man was really joined to God by a close inseparable union of the divine and human natures in one person, Christ ; so that these natures had communion, each with the other, in their actings, and Christ was able to act in his human nature, by power proper to the divine nature, wherein he was one God with the Father. And the words that he spake while that he was here on earth, he spake not of himself by any mere human power, but the Father that dwelt in him, he did the works, John xiv. 10. Why was it that Christ set up the fallen nature of man, in such a wonderful frame of holiness, in bringing it to live and act by communion with God, living and acting in it ? One great end was, that he might communicate this excellent frame to his seed, that should be born of him and in him, by his Spirit, as the last Adam, the quickening Spirit ; that " as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so we might also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. x. 45, 46, in holiness



here, and in glory hereafter. Thus he was born IMMANUEL, *God with us*; because the fulness of the Godhead, with all holiness, did first dwell in him bodily, even in his human nature; that we might be filled up with that fulness in him, Mat. i. 23. Col. ii. 9, 10. Thus he came from heaven as living bread, that, as he liveth by the Father, so that those that eat him, may live by him, John vi. 51, 59. by the same life of God in them that was first in him.

2. By his *death*, he freed himself from the guilt of our sins imputed to him, and from all that innocent weakness of his human nature, which he had borne for a time, for our sakes. And by freeing himself, he prepared a freedom for us, from our whole natural condition, which is both weak, as his was, and also polluted with our guilt and sinful corruption. Thus the corrupt natural estate, which is called in scripture *the old man*, was crucified together with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed. And it is destroyed in us, not by any wounds that we ourselves can give to it, but by our partaking of that freedom from it, and death unto it, that is already wrought out for us by the death of Christ, as is signified by our baptism, wherein we are buried with him by the application of his death to us, Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4, 10, 11. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, for sin, (or by a sacrifice for sin, as in the margin) condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 3, 5. Observe here, that though Christ died that we might be justified by the righteousness of God and of faith, not by our own righteousness, which is of the law, Rom. x. 4, 5, 6. Phil. iii. 9. yet he died also, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, and that by walking after his Spirit, as those that are in Christ, Rom. *ibid.* He is resembled in his death to a corn of wheat dying in the earth, that it may propagate its own nature, by bringing forth much fruit, John xii. 24; to the passover that was slain, that a feast



might be kept upon it; and to bread broken, that it may be nourishment to those that eat it, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. xi. 24; to the rock smitten, that water may gush out of it for us to drink, 1 Cor. x. 4. He died, that he might make of Jew and Gentile, one new man in himself, Eph. ii. 15. and that he might see his seed, *i. e.* such as derive their holy nature from him. Isa. liii. 10. Let these scriptures be well observed, and they will sufficiently evidence that Christ died, not that we might be able to form a holy nature in ourselves, but that we might receive one ready prepared and formed in Christ for us, by union and fellowship with him.

3. By his *resurrection*, he took possession of spiritual life for us, as now fully procured for us, and made to be our right and property by the merit of his death; and therefore we are said to be quickened together with Christ, even when we were dead in sins, and to be raised up together, yea, and to be made to sit together, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, as our head, while we continue upon earth in our own persons, Eph. ii. 5, 6. His resurrection was our resurrection to the life of holiness, as Adam's fall was our fall into spiritual death. And we are not ourselves the first makers and formers of our new holy nature, any more than our original corruption; but both are formed ready for us to partake of them. And by union with Christ, we partake of that spiritual life that he took possession of for us at his resurrection, and thereby we are enabled to bring forth the fruits of it, as the scripture sheweth by the similitude of a marriage union, Rom. vii. 4. "We are married to him that is risen from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God." Baptism signifieth the application of Christ's resurrection to us as well as his death; we are raised up with him in it, to newness of life, as well as buried with him; and we are taught thereby, that because "he died unto sin once, and liveth unto God, we should likewise reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 4, 5, 10, 11.

4. Our sanctification is by the *Holy Ghost*, by whom we live and walk holily, Rom. xv. 16. Gal. v. 25. Now, the *Holy Ghost* first rested on Christ in all fulness, that he might be communicated from him to us, as was signified to John the Baptist, by the similitude of the descending of a dove from the opened heavens, resting on Christ at his baptism, John i. 32, 33. And when he sanctifieth us, he baptizeth us unto Christ, and joineth us to Christ by himself, as the great bond of union, 1 Cor. xii. 30. So that according to the scriptural phrase, it is all one to have Christ himself, and to have the Spirit of Christ in us, Rom. viii. 9, 10. "He glorifieth Christ; for he receiveth those things that are Christ's, and sheweth them to us," John xvi. 14, 15. He giveth us experimental knowledge of those spiritual blessings which he himself prepared for us by the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ.

5. The effectual causes of those four principal endowments, which, in the foregoing direction, were asserted as necessary to furnish us for the immediate practice of holiness, are comprehended in the *fulness of Christ*, and treasured up for us in him; and the endowments themselves, together with their causes, are attained richly by union and fellowship with him. If we be joined to Christ, our hearts will be no longer left under the power of sinful inclinations, or in a mere indifferency of inclination to good or evil, but they will be powerfully endowed with a power, bent and propensity to the practice of holiness, by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, and inclining us to mind spiritual things, and to lust against the flesh, Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5. Gal. v. 17. And we have in Christ a full reconciliation with God, and an advancement into higher favour with him, than the first Adam had in the state of innocency; because the righteousness that Christ wrought out for us by his obedience unto the death, is imputed to us for our justification, which is called the *righteousness of God*, because it is wrought by one that is God as well as man; and therefore it is of infinite value to satisfy the justice

of God for all our sins, and to procure his pardon and highest favour for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. Rom. i. 19. And, that we may be persuaded of his reconciliation, we receive the spirit of adoption through Christ, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*, Rom. viii. 15. Hereby also we are persuaded of our future enjoyments of everlasting happiness, and of sufficient strength both to will and to perform our duty acceptably, until we come to that enjoyment. For the spirit of adoption teacheth us to conclude, that if we be the children of God, then we are *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*; and that the law of the spirit of life, that is in Christ Jesus, maketh us free from the law of sin and death; and that nothing shall be against us, nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ; but in all opposition and difficulties that we meet with, we shall be at last “more than conquerors through him that loved us,” Rom. viii. 17, 23, 35, 37, 39.

Furthermore, this comfortable persuasion of our justification and future happiness, and all saving privileges, cannot *tend to licentiousness*, as it is given only in this *way of union* with Christ; because it is joined inseparably with the *gift of sanctification*, by the Spirit of Christ: so that we cannot have justification, or any saving privilege in Christ, except we receive Christ himself and his holiness, as well as any other benefit; as the scripture testifieth, “that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” Rom. viii. 1.

6. Whereas it may be doubted whether the saints that lived before the coming of Christ in the flesh, could possibly be one flesh with him, and receive a new nature by union and fellowship with him, as prepared for them in his fulness: we are to know that the same Christ that took our flesh, *was before Abraham*, John viii. 58; and was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, to be sacrificed as a lamb without blemish, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, by his precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 18—20; and that he had the

same Spirit then, which filled his human nature with all its fulness afterwards, and raised it from the dead; and he gave that Spirit then to the church; 1 Pet. i. 11. and iii. 18, 19. Now this Spirit was able and effectual to unite those saints, to that flesh which Christ was to take to himself in the fulness of time, because he was the same in both, and to give out to them that grace with which Christ would afterwards fill his flesh for their salvation, as well as ours. Therefore David accounted Christ's flesh to be his, and spake of Christ's death and resurrection as his own, beforehand, as well as any of us can do since their accomplishment, Psal. xvi. 9, 10, 11. "My flesh also shall rest in hope: For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life." Yea, the saints before David's time, "did all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink of the same spiritual drink," even of the same Christ as we do; and therefore were partakers of the same privilege of union and fellowship with Christ, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. And when Christ was manifested in the flesh, in the fulness of time, all things in heaven and earth, all the saints departed, whose spirits *were then made perfect in heaven*, as well as those saints that then were, or should afterwards be on earth, were *gathered together in one*, and comprehended in Christ as their head, Eph. i. 10. And he was "the chief corner-stone, in whom the building of the whole church upon the foundation of the prophets" before, and the apostles after his coming, "being fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord," Eph. ii. 20, 21. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever," Heb. viii. 8. His *incarnation, death and resurrection*, were the *cause* of all the holiness that ever was or shall be given to man, from the fall of Adam to the end of the world; and that by the mighty power of his Spirit, whereby all saints that ever were, or shall be, are joined together, to be members of that one mystical body whereof he is the head.

**DIRECTION IV.**

The means or instruments whereby the Spirit of God accomplisheth our union with Christ, and our fellowship with him in all holiness, are the gospel, whereby Christ entereth into our hearts to work faith in us; and faith, whereby we actually receive Christ himself, with all his fulness, into our hearts. And this faith is a grace of the Spirit, whereby we heartily believe the gospel, and also believe on Christ, as he is revealed and freely promised to us therein, for all his salvation.

**EXPLICATION.**

THAT which I asserted in the foregoing direction, concerning the necessity of our being in Christ, and having Christ in us, by a mystical union, to enable us for a holy practice, might put us to a stand in our endeavours for holiness; because we cannot imagine how we should be able to raise ourselves above our natural sphere, to this glorious union and fellowship, until God be pleased to make known to us, by supernatural revelation, the means whereby his Spirit maketh us partakers of so high a privilege. But God is pleased to help us, when at a stand, to go on forward, by revealing two means or instruments whereby his Spirit accomplisheth the mystical union and fellowship between Christ and us, and whereby rational creatures are capable of attaining thereunto, by his Spirit working in them.

One of these means is the *gospel* of the grace of God; wherein God doth make known to us the unsearchable riches of Christ, and Christ in us, the hope of glory, Eph. iii. 8. Col. i. 27. and doth also invite us and command us to believe on Christ for his salvation, and doth encourage us by a free promise of that salvation, to all that believe on him, Acts xiv. 31. Rom. x. 9, 11.— This is God's own instrument of conveyance, wherein he sendeth Christ to us, to bless us with his salvation, Acts iii. 26. It is the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8, 9. Faith cometh by the hearing of it; and therefore it is the great instrument

whereby we are begotten in Christ, and he is formed in us, Rom. x. 16, 17. 1 Cor. iv. 15. Gal. iv. 19.—There is no need for us to say in our hearts, “who will ascend into heaven, or bring Christ down from above? or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring Christ up from the dead,” that we may be united, and have fellowship with him in his death and resurrection? for, *the word is nigh to us*, the gospel, the word of faith in which Christ himself graciously condescendeth to be nigh to us; so that we may come at him there, without going any farther, if we desire to be joined to him, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8.

The other of these means is *faith* that is wrought in us by the gospel. This is our instrument of reception, whereby the union between Christ and us is accomplished on our part, by our actual receiving with Christ himself, with all his fulness, into our heart; which is the principal subject of the present explanation.

The faith which philosophers commonly treat of is only a *habit* of the understanding, whereby we assent to a testimony upon the authority of the testifier. Accordingly, some would have faith in Christ to be no more than a believing the truth of things in religion, upon the authority of Christ testifying them. But the apostle sheweth, that the faith whereby we are justified, is “faith in Christ’s blood,” Rom. iii. 24, 25. not only in his authority as a *testifier*. And though a mere assent to a testimony were sufficient faith for knowledge of things, which the philosophers aimed at; yet we are to consider, that the design of *saving faith*, is not only to know the truth of Christ and his salvation, testified and promised in the gospel, but also to apprehend and receive him and his salvation, as given by and with the promise. Therefore, saving faith must necessarily contain two acts, believing the truth of the gospel, and believing on Christ, as promised freely to us in the gospel, for salvation. By the one, it conceiveth the *means* wherein Christ is conveyed to us; by the other, it *receiveth Christ himself*, and his salva-

tion *in the means*, as it is one act, to receive the breast or cup wherein milk or wine are conveyed, and another act, to suck the milk in the breast, and to drink the wine in the cup. And both these acts must be performed heartily, with an unfeigned love to the truth, and a desire of Christ and his salvation above all things. This is our spiritual appetite, which is truly necessary for our eating and drinking Christ, the food of life, as a natural appetite is for bodily nourishment. Our assenting unto, or believing the gospel, must not be forced by mere conviction of the truth, such as wicked men and devils may be brought to; when they had rather it were false; neither must our believing in Christ be only constrained, for fear of damnation, without any hearty love and desire towards the enjoyment of him; but we must receive the love of the truth, by relinquishing the godliness and excellency of it; and we must “account all these things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and count them but dung, that we may win Christ and be found in him,” 2 Thess. ii. 10. Phil. iii. 8, 9.—Esteeming Christ to be all our salvation and happiness, Col. iii. 11. “In whom all fulness doth dwell,” Col. i. 19. And this love must be to every part of Christ’s salvation; to holiness as well as forgiveness of sins. We must desire earnestly, that God would “create in us a clean heart and right spirit,” as well as “hide his face from our sins,” Psal. li. 9, 10; not like many that care for nothing in Christ but only deliverance from hell. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,” Mat. v. 6. The former of these acts doth immediately unite us to Christ, because it is terminated only on the *means of conveyance*, the gospel; yet it is a *saving act*, if it be rightly performed, because it inclineth and disposeth the soul to the latter act, whereby Christ himself is immediately received into the heart. He that believeth the gospel with hearty love and liking, as the most excellent truth, will certainly, with the like heartiness



believe on Christ for his salvation. "They that know the name of the Lord, will certainly put their trust in him," Psalm ix. 10. Therefore, in scripture, saving faith is sometimes described by the former of these acts, as if it were a mere believing the gospel; sometimes by the latter, as a believing on Christ, or in Christ, R m. x. 9. "If thou believest in thine heart, that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Verse 11. "The scripture saith, that whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed." 1 John v. 1. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." Verse 13. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

For the better understanding of the nature of faith, let it be further observed, that the second and principal act of it, believing on Christ, includeth believing on God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; because they are one and the same infinite God, and they all concur in our salvation by Christ, as the only mediator between God and us, "in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen," 2 Cor. i. 20. "By him (as mediator) we believe on God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God," 1 Pet. i. 21. And it is the same thing with *trusting* on God, or on the Lord, which is so highly commended in the whole scripture especially in the Old Testament; as may easily appear, by considering, that it hath the same causes, effects, objects, adjuncts, opposites, and all the same circumstances, excepting only that it had a respect to Christ as promised before his coming, and now it respecteth him as already come in the flesh. "Believing on the Lord, and trusting in his salvation," are equivalent terms, that explain one another, Psal. lxxviii. 22. I confess, that trusting on things seen, or known by the mere light of reason, as our own wisdom, power, riches, on princes, or any arm of flesh, may not so properly be called believing on them; but trusting on a Saviour as



discovered by a testimony, is properly believing on him. It is also the same thing that is expressed by the terms of resting, relying, leaning, staying ourselves on the Lord, called hoping in the Lord; because it is the ground of that expectation which is the proper act of hope, though our believing and trusting be for the present as well as future benefit of this salvation. The reason why it is so commonly expressed, in the scriptures of the New Testament, by the terms of *believing on Christ*, might be probably, because, when that part of scripture was written, there was cause, in a special manner, to urge believing the testimony that was then newly revealed by the gospel.

Having thus explained the nature of faith, I come now to assert its proper use and office in our salvation. That it is the means and instrument whereby we receive Christ and all his fulness, actually into our hearts. This excellent use and office of faith is encountered by a multitude of errors. Men naturally esteem that it is too small and slight a thing to produce so great effects, as Naaman thought washing in Jordan too small a matter for the cure of his leprosy. They condemn the true means of entering in at the strait gate, because they seem too easy for such purpose; and thereby they make the entrance not only difficult, but impossible to themselves. Some will allow that faith is the sole condition of our justification, and the instrument to receive it, according to the scriptural doctrine maintained formerly by the protestants against the papists; but they account that it is not sufficient or effectual to sanctification, but that it rather tendeth to licentiousness, if it be not joined with some other means, that may be powerful and effectual to secure any holy practice. They commend this great doctrine of protestants, as a comfortable cordial for persons on their death-beds, or in agonies under terrors of conscience; but they account that it is not good for ordinary food, and that it is wisdom in ministers to preach it seldom and sparingly, and not without some antidote or corrective, to prevent

the licentiousness to which it tendeth. Their common antidote or corrective is, that sanctification is necessary to salvation as well as justification; and that though we be justified by faith, yet we are sanctified by our own performance of the law; and so they set up salvation by works, and make the grace of justification to be of none effect, and not at all comfortable. If it had indeed such a malignant influence upon practice, it could not be owned as a doctrine proceeding from the most holy God; and all the comfort that it affords, must needs be ungrounded and deceitful. This consequence is well understood by some late refiners of the protestant religion; and therefore they have thought fit to new-model this doctrine, and to make saving faith to be only a condition to procure a right and title to our justification by the righteousness of Christ, which must be performed before we can lay any good claim to the enjoyment of it, and before we have any right to use any instrument for the actual receiving of it; and this they call an accepting of, and receiving Christ. And, that they may the better secure the practice of holiness, by their conditional faith, they will not have *trusting in God or Christ for salvation*, to be accounted the principal saving act of it; because, as it seemeth to them, many loose wicked people trust on God and Christ for their salvation as much as others, and are by their confidence, hardened the more in their wickedness; but they had rather it should be *obedience of all Christ's laws*, at least in *resolution*; or a *consent* that Christ should be their Lord, accepting of his terms of salvation, and a resignation of themselves to his government in all things. It is a sign that the scripture form of teaching is grown into disesteem with our great masters of reason, when trusting in the Lord, so much commended in the scripture, is accounted a mean and ordinary thing. They endeavour to affright us from owning faith to be an instrument of justification, by telling us that thereby we that use the instrument, are made our own principal justifiers, to the dishonour of

God; though it might be easily answered, that we are made thereby only the principal receivers of our own justification from God, the giver of it, to whom all the glory doth belong.

All these errors will fall, if it can be proved that such a faith as I have described, is an instrument whereby we actually receive Christ himself into our hearts, and holiness of heart and life, as well as justification, by union and fellowship with him. For the proof of it, I shall offer the following arguments.

1. By faith we have the actual enjoyment and possession of Christ himself, and not only of remission of sins, but of life, and so of holiness. "Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith," Eph. iii. 17. "We live to God, and yet not we, but Christ liveth in us by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 19, 20. "He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Son, and everlasting life that is in him," 1 John v. 12, 13. John ii. 36. "He that heareth Christ's word, and believeth on him that sent Christ, hath everlasting life, and is passed from death unto life," John v. 24. These texts express clearly such a faith as I have described. Therefore the efficiency or operation of faith, in order to the enjoyment of Christ and his fulness, cannot be the procurement of a bare right or title to this enjoyment; but rather it must be an entrance into it, and taking possession of it. "We have our access and entrance by faith into that grace of Christ wherein we stand," Rom. v. 2.

2. The scripture plainly ascribeth this effect to faith, that by it we receive Christ, put him on, are rooted and grounded in him: and also that we receive the Spirit, remission of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified, John i. 12. Gal. iii. 26, 27. Col. ii. 6, 7. Gal. iii. 14. Acts xxvi. 18. And the scripture illustrateth this receiving by the similitude of eating and drinking; "he that believeth on Christ, drinketh the living water of his Spirit," John vii. 37, 38, 39. "Christ is the bread of life; his flesh is meat indeed,

and his blood is drink indeed." And the way to eat and drink it, is to believe in Christ; and by so doing, we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, and have everlasting life, John vi. 35, 47, 48, 54, 55, 56. How can it be taught more clearly, that we receive Christ himself properly into our souls by faith, as we do receive food into our bodies by eating and drinking, and that Christ is as truly united to us thereby, as our food when we eat or drink it? So that faith cannot be a condition to procure a mere right or title to Christ, no more than eating or drinking procureth a mere right or title to our food; but it is rather an instrument to receive it, as the mouth that eateth and drinketh the food.

3. Christ with all his salvation, is freely given by the grace of God to all that believe on him: for "we are saved by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8, 9. "We are justified freely by his grace, through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 24, 25. The Holy Ghost, who is the bond of union between Christ and us, as a gift, Acts ii. 38. Now, that which is a gift of grace, must not at all be earned, purchased, or procured by any work, or works performed as a condition to get a right or title to it: and therefore, faith itself must not be accounted such a conditional work. "If it be by grace, it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace," Rom. xi. 6. The condition of a free gift is only take and have. And in this sense we will readily acknowledge faith to be a condition, allowing a liberty in terms where we agree in the thing; but if you give a pepper corn to purchase a title to it, then you spoil the freeness of the gift. The free offer of Christ to you, is sufficient to confer upon you a right, yea, to make it your duty to receive Christ and his salvation as yours. And because we receive Christ by faith as a free gift, therefore we may account faith to be the instrument, and, as it were, the hand whereby we receive him.

4. It hath been already proved, that all spiritual life and holiness are treasured up in the fulness of Christ,

and communicated to us by union with him. Therefore, the accomplishing of union with Christ, is the first work of saving grace in our hearts. And faith itself being a holy grace, and part of spiritual life, cannot be in us before the beginning of it; but rather it is given to us, and wrought in the very working of the union. And the way wherein it conduceth to the union, cannot be by procuring a mere title to Christ as a condition, because then it should be performed before the uniting work beginneth; but rather by being an instrument whereby we may actually receive and embrace Christ, who is already come into the soul to take possession of it as his own habitation.

5. True saving faith, such as I have described, hath in its nature and manner of operation of a peculiar aptitude or fitness to receive Christ and his salvation, and to unite our souls into him: and to furnish the soul with a new holy nature, and to bring forth a holy practice, by union and fellowship with him. God hath fitted natural instruments for their office, as the hands, feet, &c. so that we may know by their nature and natural manner of operation, for what use they are designed. In like manner we may know that faith is an instrument formed on purpose for our union with Christ, and sanctification, if we consider what a peculiar fitness it hath for the work. The discovery of this is of great use for the understanding of the mysterious manner of our receiving and practising all holiness, by union and fellowship with Christ, by this precious grace of faith. And to make you, as it were, to see with your eyes, that it is such an instrument as I have asserted it to be, I shall present it to your view in three particulars.

1. The grace of faith is as well fitted for the soul's receiving Christ and union with him, as any instrument of the body is for receiving and closing with things needful for it. By the very act of hearty trusting or believing on Christ for salvation and happiness, the soul casteth and putteth away from itself, every thing that

keepeth it at a distance from Christ; as all confidence in our strength, endeavours, works, privileges, or in any worldly pleasures, profits, honours, or in any human helps and succours for our happiness and salvation: because such confidences are inconsistent with our confidence in Christ for all salvation. Paul, by his confidence in Christ, was taken off from all confidence in the flesh: he suffered the loss of glorying in his privileges and legal righteousness, and counted all other enjoyments in matters of the world, or of religion, to be but “dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him,” Phil. iii. 5—9. The voice of faith is, “Asher shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods; for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy,” Hosea xiv. 3. We have no might against this great company” of our spiritual enemies; “neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee,” 2 Chron. xx. 12.

I might multiply places of scripture, to shew what a self-emptying grace faith is, and how it casteth other confidences out of the soul, by getting above them to Christ, as the only happiness and salvation. The same act of trusting or believing on Christ, or on God, is the very manner of our souls coming to Christ, John vi. 35; “drawing near to the Lord,” Psal. lxxiii. 28; “fleeing unto the Lord to hide us,” Psal. cxliii. 9; “making our refuge in the shadow of his wings,” Psal. lvii. 1; “staying ourselves and our minds upon the Lord,” Isa. l. 10. and xxv. 3; “laying hold on eternal life,” 1 Tim. vi. 12; “lifting up our souls to the Lord,” Psal. xxv. 1; “rolling our way, or casting our burden upon the Lord,” Psal. xxxvii. 5. and lv. 22; and of our eating and drinking Christ, as hath already appeared. Let us consider, that Christ and his salvation cannot be seen, or handled, or attained to, by any bodily motion; but are revealed and promised to us in the word. Now let any invent, if they can, any way for the soul to exercise any motion or activeness in re-

ceiving of this unseen promised salvation, besides believing the word, and trusting on Christ for the benefit promised. If Christ were to be earned by works, or any other kind of conditional faith : yet a faith must be instrumental to receive him. Some think love as fit to be the uniting grace ; but I have shewed that love to Christ's salvation is an ingredient unto faith ; and though love be an appetite unto union, yet we have no other likely way to fill this appetite, while we are in this world, besides trusting on Christ for all his benefits, as he is promised in the gospel.

2. There is in this saving faith, a natural tendency to furnish the soul with a holy frame and nature, and all endowments necessary thereunto, out of the fulness of Christ. A hearty affectionate trusting on Christ for all his salvation, as freely promised to us, hath naturally enough in it to work in our souls a rational bent and inclination to, and ability for, the practice of all holiness ; because it comprehendeth in it a trusting, that " through Christ, we are dead to sin, and alive to God ;" that " our old man is crucified," Rom. iv. 2, 3, 4 ; and that " we live by the Spirit," Gal. v. 25 ; and that " we have forgiveness of sin," and that " God is our God," Psal. xxxi. 14 ; and that " we have in the Lord righteousness and strength, whereby we are able to do all things," Isa. xlv. 24. Phil. iv. 13 ; and that " we shall be gloriously happy in the enjoyment of Christ to all eternity," Phil. iii. 20, 21. When the saints in scripture speak so highly of such glorious spiritual privileges, as I have here named, they acquaint us with the familiar sense and language of their faith, trusting on God and Christ, and they give us but an explication of the nature and contents of it ; and they speak of nothing more than what they receive out of the fulness of Christ. And how can we otherwise judge, but that those that have a hearty love to Christ, and can upon a good ground, think and speak such high things concerning themselves, must needs be heartily



disposed, and mightily strengthened for the practice of holiness?

3. Because faith hath such a natural tendency to dispose and strengthen the soul for the practice of holiness, we have cause to judge it a meet instrument to accomplish every part of that practice in an acceptable manner. Those that with a due affection believe steadfastly on Christ for the free gift of all his salvation, may find, by experience, that they are carried forth by that faith, according to the measure of its strength or weakness, to love God heartily, because God hath loved them first, 1 John iv. 19; to praise him, to pray unto him, in the name of Christ, Eph. v. 20. John xvi. 26, 27; to be patient with cheerfulness under all afflictions, giving thanks to the Father, that hath called them to his heavenly inheritance, Col. i. 11, 12; to love all the children of God out of love to their heavenly Father, 1 John v. 1; to walk as Christ walked, 1 John ii. 6; and to give themselves up to live to Christ in all things, as constrained by his love in dying for them, 2 Cor. v. 14. We have a cloud of witnesses concerning the excellent works that were produced by faith, Heb. xi. And though trusting on Christ be accounted such a slight and contemptible thing, yet I know no work of obedience, which it is not able to produce. And note the excellent manner of working by faith. By it we live and act in all good works, as people in Christ, as raised above ourselves, and in our natural state, by partaking of him and his salvation; and we do all in his name, and on his account. This is the practice of that mysterious manner of living to God in holiness, which is peculiar to the christian religion wherein we live; "and yet not we, but Christ liveth in us," Gal. ii. 20. And who can imagine any other way but this for such a practice, while Christ and his salvation are known to us only by the gospel?

The explanation that I have made of the *nature* and *office* of *true faith*, and of its *aptitude* for its office, is sufficient to evidence, that it is a most *holy faith*, as it is



called, Jude ver. 20 ; and that such a trusting on Christ, as I have described, in its own nature, cannot have any tendency to licentiousness, but only to holiness : and that it rooteth and groundeth us in holiness, more than the mere accepting of any terms of salvation, and consenting to have Christ for our Lord can do ; and is more powerful to secure a holy practice, than any of those resolutions of obedience, or resignation acts, that some would have to be the great conditions of our salvation ; which are indeed no better than hypocritical acts, if they be not produced by this faith. There is indeed a counterfeit dead faith, such as wicked men have : and if that tend to licentiousness, let not true faith be blamed ; but rather mark the description of it which I have given, that you may not be deceived with a counterfeit faith instead of it.

I shall add something concerning the *efficient cause* of this excellent grace, and of our *union* with Christ by it ; whereby it may appear, that it is not so slight and easy a way of salvation, as some may imagine. The *author and finisher of our faith*, and of our union and fellowship with Christ by faith, is no less than the *infinite Spirit of God*, and *God and Christ himself by the same Spirit* ; for “ by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body of Christ, and are all made to drink into one Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13. “ God grant us, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with all might, by the Spirit, in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith,” Eph. iii. 16, 17. If we do but consider the great effect of faith, that by it we are raised to live above our natural condition, by Christ and his Spirit living in us, we cannot rationally conceive, that it should be within the power of nature to do any thing that advanceth us so high.

If God had done no more for us in our sanctification, than to restore us to our first natural holiness ; yet this could not have been done, without putting forth his own almighty power to quicken those that are dead in sin ; how much more is this almighty power needful

to advance us to this wonderful new kind of frame, wherein we live and act, above all the power of nature, by a higher principle of life than was given to Adam in innocency, even by Christ and his Spirit living and acting in us? The natural man bringeth forth his offspring, according to his image, by that natural power of multiplying, with which God blessed him at his first creation; but the second Adam bringeth forth his offspring new-born according to his image, only by the Spirit, John iii. 5. "As many as received him, even those that believe on his name, are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13. Christ took his own human nature into personal union with himself, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, by the Holy Ghost coming upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her, the same power whereby the world was created, Luke i. 35. So he that taketh us into *mystical union* and *fellowship* with himself, by no less than an *infinite creating power*; for "we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10; and, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. v. 17.

For the accomplishing this great work of our new creation in Christ, the Spirit of God doth first work upon our hearts, by and with the gospel, to produce in us the *grace of faith*. For if the gospel should come to us in *word only*, and not in *power*, and in the *Holy Ghost*, Paul might labour to plant, and Apollos to water, without any success, because we cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God: yea, we shall account them foolishness, until the Spirit of God enable us to discern them, 1 Thess. i. 5. 1 Cor. iii. 6. and ii. 14. We shall never come to Christ, by any teaching of man, except we also hear and learn of the Father, and be drawn to Christ by his Spirit, John vi. 44, 45. And when saving faith is wrought in us, the same Spirit giveth us fast hold of Christ by it. As he openeth the mouth of faith to receive Christ, so he filleth it with

him ; or else the acting of faith would be like a dream of one that thinketh he eateth and drinketh, and when he awaketh, he findeth himself empty. The same Spirit of God did both give that faith whereby miracles were wrought, and did work also the miracles by it ; so also the same Spirit of Christ doth work saving faith in us, and doth answer the aim and end of that faith, by giving us union and fellowship with Christ by it ; so that none of the glory of this work belongeth to faith, but only to Christ and his Spirit. And, indeed, faith is of such a humbling self-denying nature, that it ascribeth nothing that it receiveth to itself, but all to the grace of God ; and therefore *God saveth us by faith*, that all the glory may be ascribed to his *free grace*, Rom. iv. 16. If Adam had strength enough in innocency, to perform the duty of faith as well as we, yet it will not follow that he had strength enough to raise himself above his natural state, into union with Christ ; because faith doth not unite us to Christ by its own virtue, but by the power of the Spirit working by it, and with it. Thus we are first passive, and then active in this great work of mystical union ; we are first apprehended of Christ. Christ entereth first into the soul, to join himself unto it, by giving it the spirit of faith ; and so the soul receiveth Christ and his Spirit by their own power, as the sun first enlighteneth our eyes, and then we can see by its light.

We may note farther, to the glory of the grace of God, that this union is fully accomplished by Christ, giving the spirit of faith to us, even before we act that faith, in the reception of him ; because by this grace or spirit of faith, the soul is inclined and disposed to an active receiving of Christ. And no doubt Christ is thus united to many infants who have the spirit of faith, and yet cannot act faith, because they are not come to the use of their understandings ; but those of riper years, that are joined passively to Christ, by the spirit of faith, will also join themselves with him actively, by the act of faith : and until they act this faith, they can-

not know or enjoy their union with Christ, and the comfort of it, or make use of it in acting any other duties of holiness acceptably in this life.

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### DIRECTION V.

We cannot attain to the practice of true holiness, by any of our endeavours, while we continue in our natural state, and are not partakers of a new state, by union and fellowship with Christ through faith.

### EXPLICATION.

It is evident, all have not that *precious faith*, whereby Christ dwelleth in our hearts; yea, the number of those that have it is small, comparatively to "the whole world that lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 19, 20; and many of those, that at length attain to it, do continue without it, for some considerable time, Eph. ii. 12.—And though some may have the spirit of faith given to them from their mother's womb (as John the baptist, Luke i. 15, 44.) yet even in them there is a *natural* being by generation, before there can be a *spiritual* being by regeneration, 1 Cor. xv. 46. Hence ariseth the consideration of two estates or conditions of the children of men, in matters that appertain to God, and godliness; the one of which is vastly different from the other.

Those that have the happiness of a new birth and creation in Christ by faith, are thereby placed in a very excellent state, consisting in the enjoyment of the righteousness of Christ for their justification; and the Spirit of Christ to live by, in holiness here, and glory for ever, as hath already appeared. Those that are not in Christ by faith, cannot be in a better state than that which they received, together with their nature, from the first Adam, by being once born and created in him; or than they can attain to by the power of that nature, with any such help as God is pleased to afford

to it. This latter I call a *natural state*, because it consisteth in such things as we have either received by natural generation, or can attain to by natural power, through divine assistance ; as the scripture calleth man in this state, the natural man, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The former I call the *new state*, because we enter into it by a new birth in Christ : and I may call it a *spiritual state*, according to the scripture ; because it receiveth from Christ the quickening Spirit, and the *natural* and *spiritual* man are opposed, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15 ; though some call both these states spiritual, because the everlasting well or woe of the soul, or spirit, of man, is chiefly concerned in them.

It is a common error of those that are in a corrupt natural state, that they seek to reform their lives according to law, without any thoughts that their state must be changed, before their lives can be changed from sin to righteousness. The heathens, that knew nothing of a new state in Christ, were urged by their own consciences, to practise several duties of the law, according to the knowledge they had by the light of nature, Rom. ii. 14, 15. Israel, according to the flesh, had a zeal of God and godliness, and endeavoured to practise the written law, at least in external performances, while they were enemies to the faith of Christ. And Paul attained so far, that he was blameless in these external performances of the righteousness of the law, while he persecuted the church of Christ, Phil. iii. 6.

Some are so near the kingdom of God, while they continue in a natural state, that they are convinced of the spirituality of the law, that it bindeth us principally to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves ; and to perform universal obedience to God, in all our inward thoughts and affections, as well as in all our outward actions, and to do all the incumbent duties we owe to our neighbour, out of this hearty love, Mark xii. 33, 34. And they struggle and labour with great earnestness to subdue their inward thoughts and affections to the law of

God, and to abstain, not only from some sins, but from all known sins, and to perform every known duty of the law with their whole heart and soul, as they think; and are active and intent in their devout practice, that they over-work their natural strength, and so fervent in their zeal, that they are ready even to kill their bodies with very severe fastings, and with other cruel macerations, that they may kill their sinful lusts. They are strongly convinced that holiness is absolutely necessary to salvation, and are deeply affected with the terrors of damnation; and yet they were never so much enlightened in the mystery of the gospel, as to know that a new state in Christ is necessary to a new life; therefore they labour in vain to reform their natural state, instead of getting above it in Christ. And some of these, when they have mis-spent many years in striving against the stream of their lusts, without any success, do at last fall miserably into despair of ever attaining to holiness, and turn to wallow in the mire of their lusts, or are fearfully swallowed up with horror of conscience.

There are several false opinions whereby such ignorant zealots encourage themselves in their fruitless endeavours. Some of them judge that they are able to practise holiness, because they are not compelled to sin, and may abstain from it if they will. To this they add, that Christ, by the merit of his death, hath restored that freedom of will to good, which was lost by the fall, and hath set nature upon its legs again; and that, if they endeavour to do what lieth in them, Christ will do the rest, by assisting them with the supplies of his saving grace; so they trust upon the grace of Christ to help them in their endeavours. They plead farther, that it would not consist with the justice of God to punish them for sin, if they could avoid it; and that it would be in vain for ministers of the gospel to preach to them, and exhort them to any saving duty, if they cannot perform it. They produce examples of heathens, and of such as had the name of christians, without any

acquaintance with the faith that I have described, who have attained to a great excellency in religious words and works.

My work at present is, to deliver those ignorant zealous from their fruitless tormenting labours, by bringing them to despair of the attainment of holiness, in a natural state, that they may seek it only in a new state by faith in Christ, where they may certainly find it, without such tormenting labour and anxiety of spirit. For this end, I shall confirm the truth asserted in the Direction, and fortify it against the fore-mentioned false opinions, by the ensuing considerations.

1. The foundation of this assertion is firmly laid in the directions already explained, and confirmed by many places of scripture. For if all endowments necessary to enable us, for a holy practice, be to be had only in a state of union and fellowship with Christ by faith, and faith itself, not by the natural power of free-will, but by the power of Christ coming into the soul by his Spirit, to unite us with himself; who seeth not, that the attainment of true holiness, by any of our most vigorous endeavours, while we continue in our natural state, is altogether hopeless? I need add no more, were it not to shew more fully what abundance of light the scripture affordeth to guide us aright in this part of our way, that those who wander out of it, by following any false light of their own or other corrupted judgments, may find themselves the more inexcuseable.

2. It is evident that we cannot practise true holiness, while we continue in a natural state; because we must be "born of water and of the Spirit," or else we "cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John iii. 3, 5; and we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10. If we could love God and our neighbour, as the law requireth, without a new birth and creation, we might live without them; for Christ hath said, "this do, and thou shalt live," Luke x. 28. Now, a new birth and creation is more than a mere



reforming and repairing our natural state. If we were put into a certain state and condition by the first birth and creation, much more by the second. For the first produceth the substance of a man as well as a state; the second had nothing to produce, but a new state of the same person. And note, that we were first created and born in Adam the natural man, but our new birth and creation are in Christ the spiritual man. And if any man be in Christ, he is in a new state, far different from the state of Adam before the fall; he is wholly a new creature: as it is written, "old things are past away; behold all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17.

3. It is positively asserted by the apostle Paul, that those "that are in the flesh cannot please God," Rom. viii. 8. Many are too overly and negligent in considering the sense of this gospel phrase, what it is to be *in the flesh*. They understand no more by it than to be sinful, or to be addicted inordinately to please the sensitive appetite. They should consider, that the apostle speaketh here of *being in the flesh*, as the cause of sinfulness; as the next verse speaketh of being *in the Spirit*, as the cause of holiness; and whatever cause it be, it must needs be different from its effect. Sin is a property of the *flesh*, or something that dwelleth in the *flesh*, Rom. vii. 18; and therefore it is not the flesh itself. The *flesh* is that which "lusteth against the Spirit" Gal. v. 17; and therefore it is not merely sinful-lusting. The true interpretation is, that by *flesh* is meant the *nature of man*, as it is corrupted by the fall of Adam, and propagated from him to us, in that corrupt state, by natural generation; and to be *in the flesh*, is to be in a *natural state*; as to be *in the Spirit*, is to be in a *new state*, by the "Spirit of Christ dwelling in us," Rom. viii. 9. The corrupt nature is called *flesh*, because it is received by carnal generation; and the new nature is called *spirit*, because it is received by spiritual regeneration. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit," John iii. 6. So the apostle, if it be rightly un-



derstood, hath said enough to make us despair utterly of attaining to true holiness, while we continue in a natural state.

4. The apostle testifieth, that those that *have been taught as the truth is in Jesus*, have learned to avoid the formal sinful conversation, by “putting off the old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts;” and by “putting on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness,” Eph. iv. 21, 22, 24. Putting off the *old man*, and putting on the *new man*, is the same with not being in the *flesh*, but in the *Spirit*, in the foregoing testimony; that is, putting off our *natural* state, and putting on a *new* state, by union and fellowship with Christ. The apostle himself sheweth, that by the *new man* is meant, that excellent state where “Christ is all, and in all,” Col. iii. 11. Therefore, by the *old man*, must needs be meant, the natural state of man, wherein he is without the saving enjoyment of Christ; which is called *old*, because of the *new* state to which believers are brought by their regeneration in Christ. This is a manner of expression peculiar to the gospel, as well as the former, and as slightly considered by those that think that the apostle’s meaning is only, that they should put off sinfulness, and put on holiness in their conversation; and so they think to become new men, by turning over a new leaf in their practice, and leading a new life.

Let them learn here, that the *old* and *new* man are two contrary states, containing in them, not only sin and holiness, but all other things that dispose and incline us to the practice of them; and that the old man must be put off, as crucified with Christ, before we can be freed from the practice of sin, Rom. vi. 6, 7. And there we cannot lead a new life, until we have first gotten a new state by faith in Christ. Let me add here, that the meaning of the apostle is the same, Rom. xiii. 12, 13, 14. where he directeth us to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, as the means whereby we may cast

off the deeds of darkness, and walk honestly, as in the day time, not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

5. Our natural state hath several *properties* that wholly disable us for the practice of holiness, and enslave us to the practice of sin, while we continue in it. Here I shall shew, that the *old man*, the *flesh*, or *natural state*, is not only sin, as some would have it, but it containeth in it several things which I shall name, that maketh it to be sinful, besides several other things that maketh it miserable. I have shewed, that in Christ we have all endowments necessary to frame us for godliness; so, in our fleshly state, we have all things contrary to that holy frame. One thing belongeth to our natural state is, the *guilt of sin*, even of Adam's first sin, and of the sinful depravation of our nature, and of all our own actual transgressions; and therefore we are by nature "the children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3. and under the *curse of God*. The benefit of remission of our sins, and freedom from condemnation, is not given to us in the *flesh*, or in a *natural state*, but only in Christ, Rom. viii. 1. Eph. i. 7. And can we imagine, that a man should be able to prevail against sin, while God is against him, and curseth him? Another property, inseparable from the former is, an *evil conscience*, which denounceth the wrath of God against us for sin, and inclineth us to abhor him as our enemy, rather than to love him, as he hath been shewed; or if it be a blind conscience, it hardeneth us the more in our sins. A third property, is an *evil inclination*, tending only to sin; which therefore is called "sin that dwelleth in us," and the "law of sin in our members," that powerfully subdueth and "captivateth us to the service of sin," Rom. vii. 20, 23. It is a fixed propensity to lust against the law without any deliberation; and therefore its lustings are not to be prevented by any diligence or watchfulness. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. How vain then is it to plead, that they can do good if they will, when their

minds and will itself is enslaved to sin? A fourth property is, "subjection to the power of the Devil, who is the god of this world, that hath blinded the minds of all that believe not," 2 Cor. iv. 4; and will certainly conquer all whom he fighteth with on his own dung-hill; that is, in a *natural state*. And from all these properties, we may well conclude, that our natural state hath the property never to be good, to be stark dead in sin, Eph. ii. 1. according to the sentence denounced against the first sin of mankind in Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17. For, you can no more bring it to holiness, by any the most vehement motives and endeavours, than you can bring a dead carcase to life, by chaffing and rubbing it. You can stir up no strength, or fortifying grace, in the natural man by such motives and endeavours; because there is no strength in him to be stirred up, Rom. v. 6. Though you do all that lieth in you to the utmost, while you are in this flesh, you can do nothing but sin; for there is *no good thing in you*, as the apostle Paul sheweth by his own experience. "I know, that in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18.

6. We have no good ground to trust on Christ to help us to will or to do that which is acceptable to him, while we continue in our natural state; or to imagine that freedom of will to holiness is restored to us by the merit of his death. For, as it hath been already shewed, Christ aimed at a higher end, in his incarnation, death and resurrection, than the restoring the decay and ruins of our natural state. He aimed to advance us to a new state, more excellent than the state of nature ever was, by union and fellowship with himself; that we might live to God, not by the power of a natural free-will, but by the power of his Spirit living and acting in us. So we may conclude, that our natural state is irrecoverable and desperate, because Christ, the only Saviour, did not aim at the recovery of it.—It is neither holy nor happy, but subject to sin, and to

all miseries, as long as it remaineth. Even those that are in a new state in Christ, and do serve the law of God with their mind, do yet with their "flesh serve the law of sin," Rom. vii. 25. As far as it remaineth in them, it "lusteth against the Spirit," Gal. vi. 17; and "it remaineth dead, because of sin," even when "the Spirit of life to them, because of righteousness," Rom. viii. 10; and must be wholly abolished by death, before we can be perfected in that holiness and happiness that is by faith in Christ. After God had promised salvation by Christ, the seed of the woman, he placed cherubims and a flaming sword to keep man out of Paradise: thereby teaching him, that his first state was lost without hope, and that the happiness intended for him was wholly new. Our old natural man was not revived and reformed by the death of Christ, but crucified together with him, and therefore to be abolished and destroyed out of us by virtue of his death, Rom. vi. 6. It is like the part of a garment infected with the plague of leprosy, which was to be rent off as incurable, that the garment might be clean, Lev. xiii. 56. "If Christ be not in us, we are reprobates," 2 Cor. xiii. 5; *i. e.* we are in a state which God hath rejected from partaking of his salvation; so that we are not to expect any assistance from God, to make us holy in it, but rather to deliver us from it.

7. This doth not at all discharge those that are in a natural state from obligation to holiness of life, nor render them inexcusable for their sins at the tribunal of God's justice. For, "God hath made man upright, but they sought out many inventions," Ecc. vii. 29. Observe well the words of this text, and you will find, that all they who have sought out many inventions, rather than upright walking, are comprehended in man that was at first made upright. And man, in the text, signifieth all mankind. The first Adam was all mankind, as Jacob and Esau were two nations in the womb of Rebecca, Gen. xxv. 23. God made us all in our first parent, according to his own image, able and in-

clined to do his law ; and in that pure nature, our obligation to obedience was first laid upon us, and the first wilful transgression, whereby our first parent bereaved himself of the image of God, and brought upon himself the sentence of death, was our sin as well as his ; for, " In one man, Adam, all have sinned, and so death is passed upon all," Rom. v. 12 ; because all mankind were in Adam's loins, when the first sin was committed ; even as Levi may be said to have paid tithes in Abraham before he was born ; because, when his father Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, he was yet in his loins, Heb. vii. 9. 10. That the promise of God, that he will not charge the iniquities of parents upon their children, is a promise belonging to the new covenant confirmed in the blood of Christ ; and it is yea and amen to us only in Christ, in whom we have another nature than that which our parents conveyed to us ; so that we cannot justly claim the benefit of it in our old natural state, Jer. xxxi. 29, 30, 31. and 2 Cor. i. 20. Those that account their impotency a sufficient plea to excuse them or others, shew that they were never truly humbled for that great wilful transgression of all mankind in the loins of Adam. Inability to pay debt, excuseth not a debtor that hath lavished away his estate ; neither doth drunkenness excuse the mad actings of a drunkard, but rather aggravates his sin. And our impotency consisteth not in a mere want of executive power, but in the want of a willing mind, to practise true holiness and righteousness. Naturally we love it not, we like it not, but lusteth against it, Gal. v. 17 ; and " hate the light," John iii. 20. If men in a natural state had a hearty love, and liking to true holiness, and a desire and serious endeavour to practise it, out of a hearty love, and yet failed in the event, then they might, under some pretence, plead for their excuse (as some do for them) that they were compelled to sin by an inevitable fate. But none have just cause to plead any such thing for their excuse ; because none endeavour to practise

true holiness out of a hearty love to it, until the good work be begun in their souls; and, when God hath begun he will perfect it, Phil. i. 6; and while, in the mean time, accept their ready mind, though they fall short in performance, 2 Cor. viii. 12. "How abominable, then, and filthy is man, that drinketh iniquity as water?" Job xv. 16; that cannot practise holiness, because he will not? this is their just condemnation, "that they love darkness rather than light. They deserve to be partakers with the devils in torments, as they partake with them in evil lusts; and their inability to do good, will no more excuse them, than it excuseth the devils.

8. Neither will this assertion make it a vain thing to preach the gospel to natural people, and to exhort them to true repentance and faith in Christ, for their conversion and salvation. For the design of our preaching is not to bring them to holiness in their natural state, but to raise them above it, and to present them *perfect in Christ*, in the performance of those duties, Col. i. 28. And though they cannot perform those duties by their natural strength; yet the gospel is made effectual for their conversion and salvation, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which accompanieth the preaching of it, to quicken those that are dead in sin, and to create them anew in Christ, by giving to them repentance unto life, and a lively faith in Christ. The gospel cometh to the elect of God, not "in word, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost," and in such assurance, that they receive "it with joy of the Holy Ghost," 2 Thess. i. 5, 6. "The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, that giveth life, 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 8. "It is mighty through God," 2 Cor. x. 4. It dependeth not at all upon the power of our free-will, to make it successful for our conversion; but it conveyeth into the soul that life and power whereby we receive and obey it. Christ can make those that are dead in sin "to hear his voice and live," John v. 25. Therefore he can speak to them by his gospel, and command them



to repent and believe with good success, as well as he could say to the dead carcases, "Talitha cumi," Mark v. 41. "Lazarus, come forth," John xi. 43, 44; and to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine house," Matth. ix. 6.

9. There is no reason that the examples of heathen philosophers, or any Jews or christians, by outward profession, that have lived without the saving knowledge of God in Christ, should move us, by their wise sayings and renowned attainments, in the practice of devotion and morality, to recede from this truth, that hath been so fully confirmed out of the holy scriptures. Have we not cause to judge that the apostle Paul, while he was a zealous Pharisee, and at least some few of the great multitudes of the Jews in his time, that were zealous for the law, and had the instruction of the holy scriptures, attained as near to that true holiness, as the heathen philosophers, or any others in their natural state? Yet Paul, after he was enlightened with the saving knowledge of Christ, judged himself the *chief of sinners*, in his former highest attainments; though, in the judgment of others, he was blameless touching the righteousness which is in the law: and he found it necessary to begin to live to God in a new way, by faith in Christ, and to suffer the *loss of all* his former attainments, and to count them but *dung*, that he might *wine Christ*, 1 Tim. i. 15. Phil. iii. 6, 7, 8.

And none of the great multitude of Jews that followed after the *law of righteousness*, did ever attain unto it, while they sought it not "by faith in Christ," Rom. ix. 31, 32. What performances are greater, in outward appearance, than for a man to give all his goods to the poor, and to give his body to be burnt? and yet the scripture alloweth us to suppose, that this may be done without true charity, and therefore without any true holiness of the heart and life, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Men in a natural state may have strong conviction of the infinite power, wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, and of the judgment to come, and the everlasting hap-

pineness of the godly, and torments of the wicked : and those convictions may stir them up, not only to make a high profession, and to utter rare sayings concerning God and godliness ; but also to labour, with great earnestness, to avoid all known sin, to subdue their lusts, to perform universal obedience to God in all known duties, and to serve him with their lives and estates to the utmost ; and to extort out of their hearts some kind of love to God and godliness, that, if possible, they may escape the terrible torments of hell, and procure everlasting happiness by their endeavours : yet all their love to God is but forced and feigned ; they have no hearty liking to God or his service ; they account him a hard master, and his commands grievous, and they repine and fret inwardly at the burden of them ; and were it not for fear of everlasting fire, they would little regard the enjoyment of God in heaven, and they would be glad if they might have the liberty to enjoy their lust without danger of damnation.

The highest preferment of those that are born only after the flesh, in Abraham's family, is but to " be children of the bond woman," Gal. iv. 23. And though they toil more in God's service than many of his dear children, yet God accepteth not their service, because their best performances are slavish, without any child-like affections towards God, and no better than glittering sins ; and yet these natural men are not at all beholden to the goodness of their natures for these counterfeit shews of holiness, or for the least abstaining from the grossest sins. If God should leave men fully to their own natural corruptions, and to the power of Satan, (as they deserve) all shew of religion and morality would be quickly banished out of the world, and we should grow past feeling in wickedness, and like the cannibals, who are as good by nature as ourselves. But God, that can restrain the burning of the fiery furnace, without quenching it, and the flowing of water, without changing its nature, doth also restrain the working of natural corruption, without mortifying it :



and through the greatness of his wisdom and power, "he maketh his enemies to yield unfeigned obedience to him," Psal. lxvi. 3; and to do many things good for the matter of them, though they can do nothing in a right holy manner.

He hath appointed several means to restrain our corruptions: as the law, terrors of conscience, terrible judgments, and rewards in this life; magistrates, human laws, labour for necessities, as food and raiment; and those gospel means that are effectual for sanctification, serve also for restraint of sin. God hath gracious ends in this restraint of sin, that his church may be preserved, and his gospel preached in the world; and that these natural men may be in a better capacity to receive the instructions of the gospel; and that such of them that are chosen, may in due time be converted; and that those of them that are not truly converted, may enjoy more of the goodness of God here, and suffer less torments hereafter. As vile and wicked as the world is, we have cause to praise and magnify the free goodness of God, that it is not worse.

#### DIRECTION VI.

Those that endeavour to perform sincere obedience to all commands of Christ, as the condition whereby they are to procure for themselves a right and title to salvation, and a good ground to trust on him for the same, do seek their salvation by the works of the law, and not by the faith of Christ, as he is revealed in the gospel; and they shall never be able to perform sincere and true holy obedience by all such endeavours.

#### EXPLANATION.

For the understanding the terms of this direction, note here, that I take *salvation* as comprehending *justification*, as well as other *saving benefits*: and *sincere obedience* as comprehending *holy resolutions*, as well as the *fulfilling* them. The most of men, that have any

sense of religion, are prone to imagine, that the sure way to establish the practice of holiness and righteousness, is to make it the procuring condition of the favour of God, and all happiness. This may appear by the various false religions that have prevailed most in the world. In this way the heathens were brought to their best devotion and morality, by the knowledge of the judgment of God, that those that violate several of the great duties to God and their neighbour, are worthy of death; and by their consciences accusing or excusing them, according to the practice of them, Rom. i. 32. and ii. 14, 15. Our consciences are informed by the common light of natural reason, that it is just with God to require us to perform those duties, that we may avoid his wrath, and enjoy his favour. And we cannot find any better way than this to obtain happiness, or to stir up ourselves to duty, without divine revelation. Yet, because our own consciences testify that we often fail in the performance of these duties, we are inclined, by self-love, to persuade ourselves that our sincere endeavours to do the best we can, shall be sufficient to procure the favour of God, and pardon for all our *failings*.

Thus we see that our persuasion of salvation, by the condition of sincere obedience, hath its original from our corrupt natural reason, and is part of the wisdom of this world. It is none of "the wisdom of God in a mystery, that hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory:" it is none of those things of the Spirit of God which "have not entered into the heart of man," and which "the natural man cannot receive; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7, 9, 14. It is none of *the foolishness of preaching*, whereby it pleased God "to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. And though we had a better way revealed to us in the gospel, for the enjoyment of the favour of God, and holiness itself, and all salvation, without any procuring condition of works, by the free

gift of God's grace through faith in Christ; yet it is very difficult to persuade men out of a way they are naturally addicted to, and that hath forestalled and captivated their judgments, and is bred in their bone, and therefore cannot easily be gotten out of the flesh. Most of those that live under the hearing and profession of the gospel, are not brought to hate sin as sin, and to love godliness for itself, though they be convinced of the necessity of it to salvation; and therefore they cannot love it heartily. The only means they can take to bring themselves to a hypocritical practice in their old natural way, that they may avoid hell, and get heaven, by their works. And their own consciences witness, the zeal and love that they have for God and godliness, their self-denial, sorrow for sin, strictness of life, are in a manner forced and extorted from them by slavish fear and mercenary hope; so that they are afraid that if they should trust on Christ for salvation, by free grace without works, the fire of their zeal and devotion would be quickly extinguished, and they should grow careless in religion, and let loose the reins to their lusts, and bring certain damnation upon themselves. This moveth them to account them the only Boanergesses who preach little or none of the doctrine of free grace, but rather spend their pains in rebuking sin, and urging people to get Christ and his salvation by their works, and thundering hell and damnation against sinners.

It hath been farther observed, that some that have contended much for salvation by free grace, without any condition of works, have fallen into antinomian opinions, and licentious practices. The experience of these things hath much prevailed with some learned and zealous men of late amongst ourselves, to recede from the doctrine of *justification of faith without works*, formerly professed unanimously, and strongly defended by the protestants against the papists, as a principal article of true religion. They have persuaded themselves, that such a way of justification is ineffectual,

yea, destructive to sanctification; and that the practice of sincere obedience cannot be established against antinomian dotages and prevailing lusts, except it be made the necessary condition of our justification, and so of our eternal salvation. Therefore they conclude, that God hath certainly made sincere obedience to be the condition of our salvation. And they have endeavoured to new-model the protestant doctrine, and to interpret the holy scriptures in a way agreeable and subservient to this their sure foundation of holiness.

But I hope to shew, that this their imagined sure foundation of holiness was never laid by the holy God; but that it is rather an error in the foundation, pernicious to the true faith, and to holiness of life. I account it an error especially to be abhorred and detested, because we are so prone to be seduced by it, and because it is an error whereby Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light, and a patron of holiness, hath greatly withstood the gospel in the apostle's times, and stirred up men to persecute it, out of zeal for the law: and hath since prevailed to set up and maintain popery, whereby the mystery of iniquity worketh apace in these days, to corrupt the purity of the gospel among protestants, and heal the deadly wound that was given to popery, by preaching the doctrine of *justification by faith, without works*.

One thing asserted in the Direction against this fundamental error is, that it is *a way of salvation by the works of the law*, and not by *the faith of Christ*, as revealed in the gospel; though the maintainers of it would have us believe that it is the only way to the gospel, that so they may not doubt of its power and efficacy for our justification, sanctification, and our whole salvation. Their reasons are, because the law, as a covenant of works, requireth us to do all its commandments perfectly that we may live; whereas they plead only for a milder condition of sincere doing, that we may live. And they plead not for doing duties, as obliged thereunto by the authority of the law given

of God by Moses, but only in obedience to the commands of Christ in the gospel. Neither do they plead for salvation by sincere obedience without Christ, but only by Christ, and through his merit and righteousness. And they acknowledge, that both salvation itself, and sincere obedience are given to them freely by the grace of Christ; so that all is of grace. They acknowledge also, that their salvation is by faith, because sincere obedience is wrought in them by believing the gospel, and is included in the nature of faith, which is the entire condition of our salvation: and some call it the resignating act of faith. But all these reasons are but a fallacious vizard upon a legal way of salvation, to make it look like pure gospel; as I shall evince by the following particulars.

1. All that seek salvation by the sincere performance of *good works*, as the procuring condition, are condemned by the apostle Paul, for seeking righteousness by the *works of the law*, and not by *faith*, Rom. ix. 32; and for seeking to be *justified by the law*, and *falling from the grace of Christ*, Gal. v. 4. This *one assertion*, if it can be proved, is enough to pluck off the fallacious vizard from the condition of sincere obedience, and to make men abhor it, as a damning legal doctrine, that bereaveth all its followers of all salvation by Christ. And the proof of it is not difficult to persons that warily consider a point of so great moment for their salvation. The Jews and judaizing christians, against whom the apostle chiefly disputed in his whole controversy, did not profess any hope of being justified by perfect obedience, according to the rigour of the law, but only by such obedience as they accounted to be sincere, and not hypocritical. And we have no cause to doubt but that the judaizing Galatians had learned, by the gospel, to distinguish sincere obedience from hypocrisy.

The Jewish religion bound all that professed it, to acknowledge themselves to be sinners; as appeareth by their anniversary humiliation on the day of atone-

ment, and several other rites of the law, and many clear testimonies in the oracles of God, that were committed to them, Psal. cxliii. 2. Prov. x. 9. Eccl. vii. 20. Yet they know they were bound to turn to the Lord with all their hearts, in sincerity and uprightness, and that God would accept of sincere obedience ; for which cause they might better put it for the condition of the law, than we can of the gospel, Psal. ii. 9, 10. Deut. vi. 5. xxx. 10. So that if the apostle had disputed against those that held only *perfect obedience* to be the condition of justification, he had contended with his own shadow. And they might as readily judge *sincere obedience* to be the condition of justification under the law, as we can judge it to be the condition under the gospel. Neither doth the apostle condemn them merely for accounting sincere obedience to the law, as given by Moses, to be the condition of their justification ; but, more generally, for *seeking* salvation by their own works. And he allegeth against them, that Abraham, who lived before the law of Moses, was not justified by any of his works, though he did perform sincere obedience ; and that David, who lived under the law of Moses, was not justified by his works, though he performed sincere obedience, and was as much given to obey the law given by Moses, as we are to obey any commands of Christ in the gospel, Rom. iv. 2, 3, 5, 6. Neither doth he condemn them for seeking their salvation only by works, without respecting at all the grace and salvation that is by Christ ; for the judaizing Galatians were yet professors of the grace and salvation of Christ, though they thought obedience to the law a necessary condition for the partaking of it, as also many other judaizing believers did. And doubtless, they accounted themselves obliged thereunto, not only by the authority of Moses, but of Christ also, whom they owned as their Lord and Saviour. And we may be sure it was no damning error, to account Moses's law obliging at that time ; for many thousands of the Jews, that were found believers, held

the ceremonies of Moses to be in force at that time; and Paul was tender towards them in it, Acts xxi. 20, 26. xv. 5. And other Jews sought justification, not only by their sincere works, but also by trusting on the promise made to Abraham, and on their priesthood and sacrifices, that were types of Christ. And the most legal Pharisees would thank God for their works, as proceeding from his grace, Luke xviii. 11. And they could as well acknowledge their salvation to be by faith, as the asserters of salvation, by sincere obedience, can in these days; for they accounted that their sincere obedience was wrought in them by believing the word of God, which contained gospel as well as legal doctrine in it; and therefore that it must be included in the nature of faith, if faith were taken for the condition of their salvation.

Let the asserters of the condition of sincere obedience learn from hence, that they are building again that judaism which the apostle Paul destroyed, whereby the Jews stumbled at Christ, Rom. ix. 32; and the Galatians were in danger of falling from Christ and grace, Gal. v. 2, 4; and let them beware of falling under that curse which he hath denounced, on this very occasion, against any man, or angel, that shall preach any other gospel than that which he hath preached, Gal. i. 8, 9.

2. The difference between the law and gospel doth not at all consist in this, the one requireth *perfect* doing; the other, only *sincere* doing; but in this, that the one requireth *doing*, the other *not* doing, but *believing* for life and salvation. Their terms are different, not only in degree, but in their whole nature.

The apostle Paul opposeth the believing required in the gospel, to all doing for life, as the condition proper to the law, Gal. iii. 12. "The law is not of faith; but the man that doth them, shall live in them." Rom. iv. 5. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." If we seek salvation by ever so easy.



and mild a condition of works, we do thereby bring ourselves under the terms of the law, and become debtors to fulfil the *whole* law in perfection, though we intended to engage ourselves only to fulfil it *in part*, Gal. v. 3; for the law is a complete declaration of the only terms whereby God will judge all that are not brought to despair of procuring salvation by any of their own works, and to receive it as a gift freely given to them by the grace of God in Christ. So that all that seek salvation, right or wrong, knowingly or ignorantly, by any works, less or more, whether invented by their own superstition, or commanded by God in the Old or New Testament, shall at last stand or fall according to these terms.

§ 3. Sincere obedience cannot be performed to all the commands of Christ in the gospel, except it be also performed to the *moral law*, as given by Moses, and as obliging us by that authority. Some asserters of the condition of salvation, by sincere obedience to the commands of Christ, would fain be free from the authority of the law of Moses, because that justifieth none, but thrusteth out a *curse* against all those that seek salvation by the works of it, Gal. iii. 10, 11. But if they were at all justified by sincere works, their respect to Moses's authority would not hinder their success: for many that were good christians, accounted themselves bound to obey, not only the moral, but the ceremonial law: and if they had sought justification by any works, they would have sought it by those, Acts xx. 20, 21. They knew not of any justification by sincere works, as commanded in the gospel; yet, if they had erred in any thing absolutely necessary to salvation, the apostles would not have tolerated their weakness. And, whether they will or no, they must seek their salvation by the works of the moral law, as given by Moses, or else they can never get it by sincere obedience to the commands of Christ. Christ never loved their new condition so well, as to abolish the Mosaical authority of the moral law, for the establishing of it. He came

not to *destroy the law and the prophets*, but to *fulfil* them, in the practice required by them; and hath declared, that “those that break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, Mat. v. 17, 19. He commanded us to “do to men whatsoever we would they should do to us, because this is the law and the prophets: which is sufficient to prove, that he would have us to account the law authoritative to oblige us in this matter. He requireth his disciples to observe and do whatsoever the Scribes and Pharisees bid them, because they “sat in Moses’s seat,” Mat. xxiii. 2, 3.

And, to come to the point in hand, when Christ had occasion to answer the questions of those that were guilty of the same error, that I am now dealing with, in seeking salvation by their own works, he shewed them that they must obey the commands as they were already established by the Mosaical authority, in the scriptures of the Old Testament: “What is written in the law? how readest thou? This do, and thou shalt live,” Luke x. 26, 28. “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;” which are, “thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery,” &c.

In like manner the apostles of Christ urged the performance of moral duties upon believers, by the authority of the law given by Moses. The apostle Paul exhorteth to *love one another*, because “he that loveth one another, hath fulfilled the law,” Rom. xiii. 8; and to “honour our father and mother, which is the first command with promise,” Eph. vi. 2. The apostle John exhorteth to *love others*, as no *new*, but an *old* commandment. The apostle James exhorteth “to fulfil the royal law, according to the scriptures: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” and to keep all the commandments of the law, one as well as another, because he that said, “do not commit adultery,” said also, “do not kill,” Jam. ii. 8, 10, 11. Sound protestants

have accounted the denial of the moral law of Moses to be an antinomian error. And though our late prevaricators against antinomianism maintain not this error; yet they establish a worse error, *justification by their sincere gospel works*. I think the denomination of the antinomians arose from this error. The law of Moses had its authority at first from Christ; for Christ was the Lord God of Israel, that ordained the law by angels on mount Sinai, in the hand of Moses, a mediator for the Israelites, who were then his only church, and with whom we believing Gentiles are now joined, as "fellow members of one and the same body," Eph. iii. 6. And though Christ hath since abrogated some of the commandments, then given by Moses, concerning figurative ceremonies and judicial proceedings, yet he hath not annulled the obligative authority of the moral law, but hath left it in its full force, to oblige in moral duties, that still are to be practised; as, when some acts of any parliament are repealed, the authority of the same parliament remaineth inviolable in other acts that are not repealed.

I know they object, that the ten commands of the moral law, *the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones*, are also done away by Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 7. But this maketh altogether against their conditional covenant: for they are the ministration of death, and done away, not as they commanded perfect obedience, for even Christ himself commandeth us to be *perfect*, Mat. v. 48; but as they were conditions for procuring life, and avoiding death, established by a promise of life to the doers, and a curse to the breakers of them, Gal. iii. 10, 12. The covenant made with Israel on mount Sinai, is abolished by Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, Heb. viii. 8, 9, 13. And the ten commandments bind us not as they were words of that covenant, Exod. xxxiv. 28. I mean, they bind us not as conditions of that covenant, except we seek to be justified by works: for the law, as a covenant, doth still stand in force enough to curse those that seek

salvation by their own works, Gal. iii. 10; and, if abolished, it is only to those that are in Christ by faith, Gal. ii. 16, 20. Acts iii. 22—25. xv. 10, 11. But the ten commandments bind us still, as they were then given to a people that were at that time under the covenant of grace made with Abraham, to shew them what duties are holy, just and good, well-pleasing to God, and to be a rule for their conversation. The result of all is, that we must still practise moral duties, as commanded by Moses; but we must not seek to be justified by our practice. If we use them as a rule of life, not as conditions of justification, they can be no *ministration of death*, or *killing letter* unto us. The perfection indeed maketh them to be harder terms to procure life by, but a better rule to discover all imperfections, and to guide us to that perfection which we should aim at. And it will be our wisdom, not to part with the authority of the decalogue of Moses, until our new divines can furnish us with another system of morality, as complete as that, and as excellently composed, and ordered by the wisdom of God, and more authentic than that is.

4. Those that endeavour to procure God's salvation, by their sincere obedience to all the commands of Christ, do *act contrary* to that way of salvation by *Christ, free grace and faith*, discovered in the gospel, though they own it in profession ever so highly.

1st. They act contrary to the way of salvation by *Christ*; for they would heal themselves, and save themselves from the power and pollution of sin, and procure God's favour, by performing sincere obedience, before they are come to Christ, the only physician and Saviour. They lay their own obedience lowest in the foundation of their salvation, and build the enjoyment of Christ upon it, who ought to be the only foundation. They would sanctify themselves, before they have a sure interest in Christ; and, "going about to establish their own righteousness, they do not submit themselves to the righteousness of God in Christ," Rom. x. 3, 4.

Sometimes they will call the righteousness of Christ, their *legal* righteousness, that they make room for an evangelical righteousness of their own works, to be the immediate procuring cause of their justification by Christ; whereas the apostle Paul knew no evangelical righteousness but that of Christ, which he called "the righteousness of faith without the law," Rom. iii. 21, 22. and not "of the law," Phil. iii. 9. Thus they make void Christ's salvation, while they pretend to own it, and Christ profiteth them nothing. Christ is become of *none effect* to them, while they would be "justified by the law," Gal. v. 2, 4. If we would be saved by Christ, we must own ourselves dead, lost sinners, that can have no righteousness for justification but his; no life or ability to do good, until God bring us into union and fellowship with him.

2d. They do act also contrary to salvation by *grace*, according to the true meaning of the gospel. For we are not *saved by grace*, as the supreme cause of salvation, by the intervention of works, given and accepted by grace, as the procuring cause; in which sense we might be saved by grace, though by a covenant of works; as a servant that hath monies given him by his master, to purchase an annuity of his master at a low rate, may profess that he had an annuity given him freely, and yet that he hath purchased it, and may claim it as a due debt. But we are saved by grace, as the immediate and complete cause of our *whole* salvation, excluding procurement of our salvation by the condition of works, and claiming it by any law as a due debt.

The scripture teacheth us, that there is a perfect opposition, and utter irreconcilableness, between salvation by grace and works: "If by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace; but, if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work," Rom. xi. 6. So also, there is an opposition between a reward reckoned of grace and of debt, Rom. iv. 4; between a promise of happiness by the law, and by grace, Rom. iv. 13, 16.

God is so jealous of the glory of his *free grace*, that he will not save us by any works, though of his own working in us, "lest any man should boast," Eph. ii. 9. He knoweth when he healeth men by physic, or maintaineth them by the labour of their hands, they are prone to attribute the glory, rather to the means they use, than to his sole bounty and goodness.

3d. They do also act contrary to the way of salvation by *faith*: for, as I have shewn already, the faith which is required for our salvation in the gospel, is to be understood in a sense contrary to doing good works, as a condition to procure our salvation, and so the true difference between terms of the law and the gospel may be maintained. *Believing* is opposed to all *working* for salvation, and the *law of works* to the *law of faith*, Rom. iv. 5. iii. 27. Eph. ii. 8, 9. Therefore, we must not here consider faith as a work of righteousness, as comprehending any works of righteousness performed or done, as a *condition* to procure a right and title to Christ, as the hand whereby we work, to earn him as our bread and drink, as our wages: but only as the *hand* whereby we receive Christ, as freely given to us, or as the *mouth* whereby we eat and drink him; as hath been proved. God giveth a sufficient right to receive Christ and his salvation, by the free gospel-offer and invitation; so that he leaveth nothing for faith to do, but to lay hold of him as a free gift, that the glory of our salvation may not be ascribed at all to our *faith* or *works*, but only to this *free grace* of God in Christ: "It is of faith, that it may be by grace," Rom. iv. 16.

5. Christ, or his apostles, never taught a gospel that requireth such a condition of works for salvation as they plead for. The texts of scripture which they usually allege for this purpose, are either contrary to it, or widely distant from it; as they might learn from many protestant interpreters, if their affection to a popish tenet had not blinded them. I shall instance briefly only in a few of these texts, whereby you may have some light to judge of the true meaning of the

rest. That *obedience of faith*, mentioned by the apostle Paul, as the great design of *gospel preaching*, Rom. i. 5. is as contrary to their condition of sincere obedience for salvation, as the *law of faith* is to the *law of works*, Rom. iii. 23. It is an obedience that consisteth in "believing the report of the gospel;" as the apostle explaineth himself, Rom. x. 16. "They have not all obeyed the gospel; for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" Faith is to be *imputed* for righteousness, not because it is a *work* of righteousness itself, but because we do by it *renounce* all confidence in any righteous works whatsoever, and trust on him that justifieth the ungodly; as is clear by that very text which they usually pervert for their purpose, Rom. iv. 5. They grossly pervert those words of Paul, Rom. ii. 6, 7. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life:" Where they will have Paul to be declaring the *terms of the gospel*, when he is evidently declaring the *terms of the law*, to prove that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and that no flesh can be justified by the works of the law, as appeareth by the tenor of his following discourse, Rom. iii. 9, 10. They join evidently with the papists, against the concurrent judgment of the best protestant divines, in the interpretation of that text, James ii. 24. "Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Where they will have James to deliver the doctrine of justification in more proper expressions than the apostle Paul, who teacheth justification by faith without works; though Paul treateth on this doctrine as his principal subject, and James doth only speak of it occasionally, as a motive to the practice of good works; whereby we may easily judge which of their expressions are to be taken for the most proper.

Protestants have shewed sufficiently, that James speaketh not of a true saving faith, but of such a dead faith as devils have; not of justification in a proper



sense, but of the declaration and manifestation of it by its fruits. Besides he speaks of justification by works, as commanded in the law given by Moses; as appeareth by his citing the commandments of the law, ver. 8, 11. which our contrivers of the new divinity would have nothing to do with in their model of the doctrine of justification.

Another text alleged by them, is, Rev. xxii. 14. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." But the Greek word, which is here translated *right*, is translated *power* or *privilege*, John i. 12. It signifieth here, a *rightful possession* of the fruit of the tree of life, and not a mere title to it. So this text proveth no more than what the protestants generally acknowledge, that good works are the way wherein we are to walk to the enjoyments and possession of the glory of Christ; though a title to Christ, and his glorious salvation, be freely given us without any procuring condition of works. They account also, that when the happiness of heaven is called a *reward*, it must needs imply a *procuring condition of works*, as, Rev. xxii. 12. Mat. v. 12. But though it be called a reward, because it is given after the doing of good works, and because it recompenseth good works, better than any wages on earth can recompense the labourer: yet it is a reward of *grace*, not of *debt*, Rom. iv. 4; it is no proper wages, but a free gift: Rom. vi. 24; "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Another thing asserted in the Direction is, that those that endeavour to perform this sincere obedience, as a condition to procure a right and title to Christ and his salvation, shall never be able to perform *sincerely* any true obedience by all such endeavours. Though they labour earnestly, and pray fervently, fast frequently, and oblige themselves to holiness by many vows, and press themselves to the practice of it, by the most for-

cible motives, taken from the infinite power, justice, and knowledge of God, the equity and goodness of his commands, the salvation of Christ, everlasting misery, or any other motive, improved by the most affectionate meditation; yet they shall never attain to the end which they aim at in such an erroneous way. They may restrain their corruptions, and bring themselves to many hypocritical slavish performances, whereby they may be esteemed among men, as eminent saints; but they shall not be able to mortify one corruption, or to perform one duty in such a holy manner as God approveth. Yet here I censure only an error, not the life of the persons that maintain it. I have heard that some preach legally, and pray evangelically. I doubt not but the frame of their hearts and lives is rather according to their prayers than their sermons. Though Peter complied with judaism, in an outward act of profession, yet he lived himself like a christian, Gal. ii. 11, 14. I affirm only, that no godly person did or could attain to this godliness in this erroneous way. And what a lamentable disappointment this to those that have attempted to alter the protestant doctrine, and to pervert and confound law and gospel, and have bred much contention in the church, that they might secure the practice of sincere obedience against antinomian errors, by making it the procuring condition of their salvation; when, after all this ado, the remedy is found to be as bad as the disease, equally unserviceable and destructive to that great end for which they designed it; and that it hath an antinomian effect and operation, contrary to the power of godliness!

Much more might be said for the confutation of this novel doctrine; but, if this one thing be well proved, it may be sufficient to make the zealous contrivers of it to be ashamed of their craft, and angry with themselves, and sorry that they have taken so much pains, and so stretched their wits, to maintain such an unprofitable, unsanctifying opinion. It will be sufficient for the proof of it, if I shew, that the practice of true holi-

ness cannot possibly be attained unto, by seeking to be saved by the works of the law ; because I have already proved, that this doctrine of salvation, by sincere obedience, is according to the terms of the law, and not of the gospel. And hereby those also may see their error, that ascribe justification only to the gospel, and sanctification to the law. Yet, because those asserters of the condition of sincere obedience will hardly be persuaded by what hath been said, that it is the way of the law of works ; I shall, for their more full conviction, sufficiently manifest, that it is of no other nature and operation, than any other doctrine that is proper to the law, and hath no better fruit ; as I proceed to prove, by the following arguments, that holiness cannot be attained by seeking it by the law of works, that so it may appear not worthy to be called gospel doctrine.

1. The way of salvation by the works of the law, is contrary and destructive to those *necessary means* of a holy practice, that have been laid down in the foregoing directions, and manifestly proved out of the holy scriptures. I have made it appear, that a hearty propensity to a holy practice cannot be attained without some good persuasion of our reconciliation with God by justification, and of our everlasting happiness, and of sufficient strength both to will and to perform our duty ; and that these and all other endowments necessary to the same end, are to be had only in Christ, by union and fellowship with him ; and that Christ himself, and all his fulness, is united to us by faith ; which is not a condition to procure a right and title to Christ, but an instrument whereby we receive him actually in our hearts, by trusting on him for all salvation freely promised to us in the gospel.

All these means of a holy practice, are things wherein our spiritual life and happiness doth consist ; so that, if we have them, everlasting life is begun in us already ; and because they are the necessary means of a holy practice, therefore the beginning of everlasting life in us must not be placed after such a practice, as the fruit.

and consequence of it; but must go before it, as the cause before the effect. Now, the terms of the law are directly contrary to this method. They place the practice of holiness before life, and to make it to be the means and procuring cause of life; as Moses describeth them, Rom. x. 5. "The man that doth these things, shall live by them." By these terms, you are first to do the holy duties commanded, before you have any interest in the life promised, or any right to lay hold of it, as yours, by faith. And you must practise holiness without the fore-mentioned means, or else you can never attain them. Thus the true means are turned out of their office; and instead of being *causes*, they are made to be *effects* and *fruits* of a holy practice. And it will be in vain ever to expect such effects and fruits; for holiness itself, with all its effects, must needs be destroyed, when its necessary causes are done away. Therefore, the apostle Paul testifieth, that the way of salvation by the works of the law maketh faith void, and the promise of none effect; and frustrateth the grace of God, as if Christ died in vain; and maketh Christ to be of no profit, and of none effect to us, as those that are fallen from grace, Rom. iv. 14. Gal. ii. 21. and v. 2, 4.

Let us now examine the modern doctrine of salvation, by the condition of sincere obedience to all the commands of Christ, and we shall quickly find it to be a chip of the same block with the former legal way of salvation, in the same manner destructive to the means of holiness itself. It requireth of us the performance of sincere and complete obedience, before we have the means necessary to produce it, by making it antecedent to our justification, and persuasion of eternal happiness, and our actual enjoyment of union and fellowship with Christ, and of that new nature which is to be had only in him by faith. It destroyeth the nature of that saving faith whereby we actually receive and enjoy Christ and all his benefits, and knocketh off our hands from laying hold of Christ and his salvation, by telling us

still, as Christ told the legal worker, after all his labour, that yet we lack something, Mark x. 21 ; that it is presumption to take him as our own, until we have performed the condition for our right and title to him ; which is another kind of saving faith, otherwise called sincere obedience. By this devised conditional faith, Satan keepeth many poor souls at bay, poring upon their own hearts for many years together, to find whether they have performed the condition, and whether they have as yet any right to Christ for their salvation, not daring to venture to take him as their own. It is a strong partition-wall, that will certainly hinder the soul from coming to Christ, until it be thrown down by the knowledge of salvation by grace, without any procuring condition of works. And though it be accounted but as the payment of a pepper-corn for a great estate ; yet it is enough to break the ablest man in the world, because it debarreth him from laying hold of the only effectual means of holiness, whereby that pepper-corn may be obtained.

2. Those that seek salvation by the works of the law, do therein act according to their *natural state*. They live and walk according to the flesh, or old man ; not according to the new state, by Christ living in them. I doubt not but several of them that live under the light of the gospel, are partakers of a new state in Christ, and do walk holily in it ; but the best in this world have in them flesh as well as spirit, and may act according to either state in some measure ; and in this matter they do act only according to their carnal natural state. When the believing Galatians were seduced to a legal way of salvation, the apostle Paul chargeth it upon them as their folly, that, having began in the Spirit, they would now be “ made perfect in the flesh,” Gal. iii. 3. And he resembleth those that desire to be under the law, to Abraham’s son, born of Hagar, the bond woman, to shew, that such do walk as those that “ are born after the flesh, not after the Spirit,” Gal. iv. 19, 23, 26. The law was first given to Adam in his pure na-

tural state, to prescribe terms for his continuance in the happiness which he then enjoyed. And ever since that time, the flesh, or natural man, is married to the law, and the *law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth*, that is, until he be dead to his fleshly state by the body of Christ, and "married to him" that is "raised from the dead," Rom. vii. 1, 4. We are not at all under the law as a covenant of works, according to our new state in Christ; as the apostle testifieth, Rom. vi. 14. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace:" and Gal. v. 18. "If ye are led by the Spirit; ye are not under the law." From hence, we may firmly conclude, that none can possibly attain to true godliness by acting according to legal terms; because I have fully proved already, that it is impossible to be godly while we are in the flesh, or in a natural state; and that, as far as we act according to it, we can do nothing but sin. The law is so weak through the flesh, that it cannot bring us to fulfil its own righteousness, Rom. viii. 3, 4. It is married to a cross piece of flesh, that is enmity to it, and can never be subject to it, Rom. viii. 8. It sueth the natural man for an old debt of obedience, that he is utterly unable to pay since the fall: and the success accordingly; it gets nothing. Neither do those take a better course, that would bring themselves to holiness, by making sincere obedience to Christ's commands, the condition of their salvation. Their way is the same for substance with that of the Galatians before mentioned, who would be made perfect in the flesh, not by perfect obedience, but sincere; as hath been shewed before. Their endeavours to procure an interest in Christ, by their sincere obedience, do testify against themselves, that they do not act as people that are in Christ, but rather as people that judge themselves to be without an interest in Christ, and to be yet to seek for it. And sincere obedience is as impossible to be attained unto, as perfect obedience, if we act according to our dead natural state.

3. As the law bereaveth of all strengthening means that are to be had by faith in Christ, and findeth us without strength in our natural state; so of itself, it affordeth us *no strength* to fulfil its own commands: "If there had been a law given that could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," Gal. iii. 21. It doth not so much as promise life, until we have performed the obedience required by it. "The man that doth these things shall live by them," Rom. x. 5. It is well called a "voice of words," Heb. xii. 19; because its high and big words are not accompanied with an enlivening power. And the doctrine of life and salvation by sincere obedience is no better natured, or more bountiful to us; for it exacteth of us the performance of the condition, before it alloweth us any life or salvation by Christ. Can any man rationally expect strength to obey sincerely, by following a doctrine that doth not so much as promise it? The true gospel is of a more benign nature; for it promiseth, that "God will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh," Acts ii. 17; "and will put his laws into our minds, and write them in our hearts," Heb. viii. 10; "and will cause us to walk in his statutes, that we shall keep his judgments, and do them," Ezek. xxxvi. 27. This word of God's grace, that requireth not holiness of us as a condition, but promiseth it to us as a free gift, must needs be the only doctrine, "that is able to build us up, and to give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified," Acts xx. 32. Seeing it pleaseth God to bring us to holiness by believing a doctrine, we may reasonably expect that God should work upon us suitably to the nature of the doctrine which we believe; that he should give by a giving doctrine, and exact by an exacting doctrine.

4. The way of procuring life and happiness, by the condition of perfect or sincere works, is not a *rational method*, for the recovery of fallen man; though it were good for the preserving of life before the fall: for, it prescribeth the immediate practice of holiness to re-



cover a man dead in sin ; as if one should say to the sick of the palsy, *arise and walk, and then thou shalt be whole and able to walk*. We sometimes say jestingly to a child that is fallen on the ground, *come hither, and I will help thee up* : but if we should say so to one that is cast on his bed by a dead palsy, we should be guilty of mocking and cruelly insulting the afflicted. Those that are humbled and made sensible of their original sin, and natural deadness, know that they must first live by the Spirit, before they can act holily, Gal. v. 25. They will inquire, “ How shall we have strength to perform the duty required ? ” If you answer, that they must trust in God and Christ to help them ; they may readily reply, they have no sure ground to trust on God or Christ, for any saving grace, according to this doctrine, before they have performed this condition, at least in a sincere resolution of obedience, and that they are as unable to bring their hearts to such a resolution, as a dead man is to raise himself out of the grave. Take another instance. The method of the doctrine of works is, you must love God first, and then, on that condition, he will love you again ; whereas, on the contrary, “ we love God, because he first loved us,” 1 John iv. 16. And if God suspend his love to us upon any condition, our love to him will not be absolute, but suspended upon the same condition, and no way contrary to an actual hating of him.

5. The law is so far from healing our sinful corruption, that it proveth rather an *occasion* of *sinful motions* and *actings*, in those that seek salvation by the works of it. This cometh to pass by reason of the power of our natural corruption ; which is stirred up and rageth the more, when the holy and just law of God is set in opposition against it ; so that the fault is not in the law, but in our own hearts. Those that find not this by their own experience, should believe the apostle Paul, who teacheth it plainly, and that from his own experience, Rom. vii. 5, 14. He affirmeth, that there are *motions* of sin by the law, in a fleshly state : *Thou shalt*

*not covet*, wrought in him all manner of concupiscence, deceived him, slew him, became exceeding sinful ; and that without the law, he was alive, and sin died ; but, when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died. He sheweth the cause of this irreconcilable enmity and contrariety between his sinful nature and the law : *The law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin.* Take notice here, from the reason given by the apostle, that the doctrine of salvation, by sincere obedience, will have the same event. Corrupt nature is contrary to sincere obedience, as well as perfect ; and, if we make it the condition of our salvation, sin will take the same occasion by it, to become exceeding sinful in its motions and actings.

The success of legal doctrine upon the natural man, is according to the proverb, “ reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee,” Prov. ix. 8. Rebuking a madman, is the way to enrage him ; and such is the natural man in spiritual things, since he fell out of his right mind by the sin of Adam. We find, by manifold experience, that though men be generally addicted to the principle of salvation by works, yet multitudes of them hate all strict preachers and professors of true holiness, because they are a torment to their consciences. They endeavour to shelter themselves in ignorance of the law : accounting, that the less they know, the less they shall answer for ; and therefore they would not have right things prophesied unto them, Isaiah xxx. 10. And they have prevailed generally in the world, to darken the natural knowledge of moral duties, in such a degree, that there is a necessity of learning them by divine revelation out of the scriptures. We may find how prone legal writers are to corrupt the sense of the law, that they may leave starting holes for their corruptions, by the corrupt glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, from which Christ did vindicate it, as we see, Matthew fifth. And, as far as I have observed, none more endeavour to discover the purity and perfection of the law, than those that seek holiness and salvation, with-

out any legal condition, by the mere free grace of God in Christ. The doctrine of salvation, by sincere obedience, is but a mincing the perfection required in the law: and yet how is this doctrine minced again and again, until it is become so small, that the substance of all true obedience is lost? A willingness to be saved according to Christ's terms, or a consent that Christ should be our Lord, or a resolution to obey his commandments (which is little more than ignorant men trust on, when they say, they hope God will save them because they have a good meaning, though they live in the neglect of all religion) without any further practice of holiness, shall pass with many for enough of sincere obedience, both to enter them into a state of salvation, and to continue them in it; so that they shall never be accounted breakers of the gospel covenant, while so much can be pretended. The most that is made necessary for salvation, shall be only to endeavour to do what we can to obey Christ's commands; though all that the most can do, is nothing that is truly good.

Those that have a little more zeal for their salvation by works, are prone to spend it in superstitious observances, because they suit better with their carnal nature, than the spiritual commands of God and Christ. I doubt not but this hath been one occasion of the prevailing of heathenish, Jewish and popish superstitions in the world. We find, by experience, how popery fell in several nations of late years, when the great pillar of it, the doctrine of justification by works, was overthrown by the protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone. If these legal zealots be forced, by strong conviction, to endeavour the practice of spiritual duties, for quieting their guilty consciences, they may possibly be brought to strive and labour earnestly, and even to macerate their bodies with fasting, that they may kill their lusts; but still their lusts are living, and strong as ever they were; and do shew forth their enmity against the law of God, by inward fretting, repining, and grudging at it, as a grievous task-master,

though a slavish fear restrain their gross outward actions. And, if once these zealots be enlightened with the knowledge of the spiritual nature of the law, to discern that God rejecteth all their slavish service, and will not own it for sincere obedience; then they fall into despair of their salvation, because they see they have failed in their highest attempts to perform the condition; and then they can easily discover themselves, that their hearts swell in anger and manifest hatred against the law, yea, and against God and Christ, for prescribing such hard conditions of salvation, which they cannot keep, and yet must expect to be damned eternally for breaking them. This filleth them with blasphemous thoughts against God and Christ, and they can hardly refrain from blaspheming him with their tongues. And when they are brought to this horrible condition, if God doth not in mercy discover to them the way of salvation, by free grace, through faith alone, they will endeavour, if they can, to sear their consciences past feeling of sin, and fully to abandon all religion, which hath proved such an unsufferable torment to them: or, if they cannot sear their consciences, some of them are easily prevailed with by Satan, rather to murder themselves, than to live longer in the hatred of God, the spirit of blasphemy, and continual horror of conscience. This is the pestilent effect of the legal doctrine upon a carnal heart, that doth but rouse up, and terribly enrage the sleeping lion, our sinful corruption, instead of killing it: as is too evident by the experience of many that have endeavoured, with all their might, to practise it; and, by the scripture, that sheweth a sufficient cause why it cannot be otherwise. Therefore, the doctrine of salvation, by sincere obedience, that was invented against antinomianism, may well be ranked among the worst antinomian errors. For my part, I hate it with perfect hatred, and account it mine enemy, as I have found it to be. And I have found, by some good experience, the truth of the lesson taught by the apostle, that the way to be freed from

the mastery and dominion of sin, is, "not to be under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14.

6. The way of salvation by works was *blasted* by the *curse* denounced against the first Adam's sin; so that now it cannot work life in us, or holiness, but only death; for the law, which requireth both sincere and perfect obedience to God in all things, was made known to Adam at his first creation, as the means of the continuing the happy life that was then bestowed upon him; and it would have been effectual for this end, if he had not transgressed in the forbidden fruit. But, when he had once brought himself and his posterity under the terrible sentence, "thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17; all that knowledge of God, or his law, that before wrought for continuance of life, was turned by that cursed sentence the contrary way, to work for his death, even for the death of the soul in sin, as well as for the death of his body; and therefore it quickly moved him to hide himself from God as an enemy. It was, as if God should say, "all the light and knowledge that thou hast, shall not be able to continue thy life, or restore it; but it shall rather tend to thy death." Therefore, while we continue in our natural state, under the first Adam's guilt and curse, the knowledge of the law, yea, and all such knowledge of God and his attributes, as natural men attain to, must needs be, in like manner, accursed to us. And seeing man did not use his natural knowledge and wisdom alike, God is resolved to revenge the abuse of it, by giving us salvation in a way contrary to it, that seemeth foolishness to the natural man; and wholly to abolish the way of living by any of our works, or by any wisdom or knowledge that the natural man can attain unto. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? for, after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 21. Hence we

may conclude, that no truth, known by the light of nature, can be an effectual principle, or motive, to work holiness in us; and gospel principles and motives are but abused, when they are applied to a legal way of salvation.

7. The end which God aimed at in giving the law to Moses, was not, that any should ever attain to holiness or salvation, by the condition of *perfect* or *sincere* obedience to it; though, if there had been any such way of salvation at that time, it must have consisted in the performance of that law, which was then given to the church, to be a rule of life, as well as a covenant. There was another covenant made before that time with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a covenant of grace, promising all blessings freely through Christ, the promised seed. And the covenant of the law was added, that they might see their sinfulness, and subjection to death and wrath, and the impossibility of attaining to life or holiness by their works, and be forced to trust on the free promise only for all their salvation, and that sin might be restrained by the spirit of bondage, until the coming of that promised seed, Jesus Christ, and the more plentiful pouring out of the sanctifying Spirit, by him. This the apostle sheweth largely, Gal. iii. 15—24. Rom. v. 20, 21. and x. 3, 4. None of the Israelites under the Old Testament were ever saved by the Sinai covenant; neither did any of them ever attain to holiness by the terms of it. Some of them did, indeed, perform the commandments of it sincerely, though imperfectly: but those were first justified, and made partakers of life and holiness, by virtue of that better covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which was the same, in substance, with the new covenant, or testament, established by the blood of Christ. Had it not been for that better covenant, the Sinai covenant would have proved to them an occasion of no happiness, but only of sin, despair and destruction. Of itself it was only a *killing letter, the ministration of death and condemnation*: and therefore it is now abolished, 2 Cor. iii. 6—11.

We have great cause to praise God, for delivering his church, by the blood of Christ, from this yoke of bondage; and we have cause to abhor the device of those that would lay upon us now a more grievous and terrible yoke, by turning our new covenant into a covenant of sincere works, and leaving us no such better covenant, as the Israelites had under their yoke, to relieve us in our extremity.

### DIRECTION VII.

We are not to imagine that our hearts and lives must be changed from Sin to Holiness, in any measure, before we may safely venture to trust on Christ for the sure enjoyment of himself, and his salvation.

### EXPLICATION.

We are naturally so prone to ground our salvation upon our own works, that if we cannot make them *procuring* conditions and *causes* of our salvation by Christ, yet we shall endeavour at least to make them *necessary preparatives*, to fit us for receiving Christ and his salvation by faith. And men are easily persuaded, that this is not at all contrary to salvation by free grace, because all that is hereby ascribed to our works, or good qualifications, is only, "That they put us in a *fit posture* to receive a free gift. If we were to go to a prince for a free gift, good manners, and due reverence, would teach us to trim ourselves first, and change our slovenly cloaths, as Joseph did, when he came out of the dungeon into the presence of Pharaoh. It seemeth to be an impudent slighting and contemning the justice and holiness of God and Christ, and an insufferable affront and indignity offered to the divine Majesty, when any dare presume to approach his presence in the nasty pickle of his sins, covered all over with putrifying sores, not at all closed, bound up, or cleansed; much more when they endeavour, to receive the



Most Holy ONE, into such an abominable stinking kennel, as a sinner's heart is, before it be at all reformed. The parable concerning the man that was to be bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness, for coming to the royal wedding, without a wedding garment, seemeth to be intended against all such presumption," Matth. xxii. 11, 13. Many that behold with terror, the abominable filth of their own hearts, are kept off from coming immediately to Christ, by such imaginations, which Satan strongly maintaineth and increaseth in them by his suggestions; so that they can by no means be persuaded out of them, until God teacheth them inwardly, by the powerful operation of his Spirit. They delay the saving act of faith, because they think they are not yet duly qualified for it. On the same account, many weak believers delay coming to the Lord's Supper, for many years together, even as long as they live in this world; and would be as likely to delay their baptism, if they had not been baptized in their infancy. Against all such imaginations, I shall propose the following considerations.

1. This error is pernicious to the *practice of holiness*, and to our *whole salvation*, in the same manner with that treated of in the foregoing Direction, and may be confuted by the same arguments which are there produced. Whether holiness be made a procuring condition of our salvation through Christ, or only a condition necessary to qualify us for the reception of Christ, we are equally brought under those legal terms, of doing first the duties required in the law, that so we may live. Therefore, we are equally bereaved of the assistance of those means of holiness, mentioned in the foregoing directions, as union and fellowship with Christ, and the enjoyment of all his sanctifying endowments by faith, which should go before the practice of holiness, that they may enable us for it; and we are equally left to labour in vain for holiness, while we are in our accursed natural state, whereby our sinful corruption will rather be exasperated than mortified, so that we shall never

be duly prepared for the reception of Christ, as long as we live in the world. Thus, while we endeavour to prepare our way to Christ, by holy qualifications, we do rather fill it with stumbling-blocks, and deep pits, whereby our souls are hindered from ever attaining to the salvation by Christ.

2. Any the least change of our hearts and lives from sin to holiness, before our receiving of Christ and his salvation by faith, is not at all *necessary*, according to the terms of the gospel, nor *required* in the word of God. Christ would have the vilest sinners come to him for salvation immediately, without delaying the time to prepare themselves for him. When the wicked jailer inquired, *what he must do to be saved?* Paul directed him forthwith to *believe on Christ*, with a promise, that in so doing *he should be saved*; and straightway, he and his were *baptized*, Acts xvi. 30, 33. Paul doth not tell him, that he must reform his heart and life first, though he was in a very nasty pickle at that time, having but a little before fastened Paul and Silas in the stocks, and newly attempted a horrid wilful self-murder. Those three thousand Jews that were converted by Peter's preaching, and added the same day to the church by baptism, Acts ii. 41. seemed to have as much need of some considerable time to prepare themselves for receiving Christ as others, because they had but lately polluted themselves with the murder of Christ himself, ver. 33. Christ commands his servants to go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and to bring in to his feast, the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind; yea, to go out into the highway, and to compel them to come in, without allowing them to tarry until they had cleansed their sores, and shifted off their filthy rags, and swarms of lice, Mat. xxii. 10. Luke xiv. 23. Christ would have us to believe on him that justifieth the ungodly; and therefore he doth not require us to be godly before we believe, Rom. iv. 5. He came as a physician for the sick, and doth not expect that they should re-

cover their health, in the least degree, before they come to him, Mat. ix. 12. The vilest sinners are fitly prepared and qualified for this design; which is, to shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace, pardoning our sins, and saving us freely, Eph. ii. 5, 7. For this end the law of Moses entered that the *offence might abound*; that is, "where sin abounded, grace might much more abound," Rom. v. 20. He loved us in our most loathsome sinful pollution, so as to die for us; and much more will he love us in it, so as to receive us when we come to him for the purchased salvation. He hath given full satisfaction to the justice of God for sinners, that they might have all righteousness and holiness, and all salvation only by fellowship with him through faith. Therefore, it is no affront to Christ, or slighting or contemning the justice and holiness of God, to come to Christ, while we are polluted sinners; but rather it is an affronting and contemning the saving grace, merit, and fulness of Christ, if we endeavour to make ourselves righteous and holy before we receive Christ himself, and all righteousness and holiness in him by faith. Christ loathed not to touch a leper, and condescended to wash the feet of his disciples, and did not expect that they should be washed and perfumed beforehand, as some great ones of the world are said to do, when they wash the feet of poor men, in imitation of Christ.

3. Those that receive Christ, with an unfeigned faith, shall never want a *wedding garment* to adorn them in the sight of God. *Faith* itself is very *precious* in the sight of God, and *most holy*, 2 Pet. i. 2. Jude, ver. 20. God loveth it, because it giveth the glory of our salvation on the free grace of God in Christ, Rom. iv. 16; and renounceth all dependence upon any conditions, that we can perform, to procure a right to Christ, or to make ourselves acceptable to him. It containeth in it a hearty love to Christ as a Saviour, and a hungering and thirsting appetite for his salvation; and it is the mouth whereby the soul feedeth hungrily upon

him. What wedding garment can sinners bring with them, more delightful than this to their bountiful God, whose great design is to manifest the abundant riches of his glorious grace and bounty in this wedding-feast? The Father himself loveth them, because they love Christ, and believe that he came out from God, John xiv. 27. But yet we see that the excellency of faith lieth in this, that it accounteth not itself, nor any other work of ours, a sufficient ornament to make us acceptable in the sight of God. It will not be our wedding garment itself, but it buyeth of Christ, "white raiment, that we may be clothed," and that "the shame of our nakedness may not appear," Rev. iii. 18. Though it loveth and desireth the free gift of holiness; yet it abandons all thoughts of practising holiness immediately, before we come to Christ for a holy nature. It putteth on Christ himself, and in him all things that pertain to life and godliness. Thus every true believer is "clothed with the sun," Rev. xxii. 1. even with the *sun of righteousness*, the Lord Jesus; who is pleased to be himself both our wedding garment and feast, and all our spiritual and eternal happiness.

For more full satisfaction and consolation of those distressed souls, that lie under the terrible apprehensions of their own sinfulness, and the wrath of God, and dare not to venture to trust stedfastly on Christ for their salvation, until they can find in themselves some change from sin to holiness; I shall mention particularly several of these things that such would find in themselves; and I shall shew, that, if some of them be not partly comprehended in faith itself, they are *fruits* and *consequences* of faith: and therefore they cannot be rationally expected before we trust on Christ for our salvation.

1. They think it necessary to *repent* before they believe on Christ for their salvation, because repentance is absolutely necessary to salvation, Luke xiii. 3. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish;" and Christ placeth the duty of repentance before faith, Mark i. 15. "Repent, and believe the gospel." But we are

to know, that Christ requireth repentance first as the end to be aimed at, and faith in the next place, as the only means of attaining to it; and though the end be first in intention, yet the means are first in practice and execution, though both be absolutely necessary to salvation. For, what is repentance, but a hearty turning from sin to God, and his service? and what way is there to turn to God, but through Christ, "who is the way, the truth, and the life; without whom none cometh to the Father?" John xiv. 6; and what way is there of coming to Christ, but by faith? Therefore, if we would turn to God in the right way, we must first come to Christ by faith, and faith must go before repentance, as the greatest instrument afforded us by the grace of God, for the effectual performance of it. Repentance is indeed a duty which sinners owe naturally to God; but the great question is, how shall sinners be able to perform it? This question is solved only by the gospel of Christ, *repent and believe*. The way to repent is to begin with believing. Therefore, the great doctrine of John, in his baptism of repentance, was, that they "should believe on him that should come after him," that is, on Christ Jesus, Acts xix. 4.

2. *Regeneration* also is necessary to salvation, John iii. 3; and therefore, many would find it wrought in themselves before they trust on Christ for their salvation. But consider what regeneration is. It is a new begetting or creating us in Christ, 1 Cor. iv. 15. Eph. iii. 10. in whom we are partakers of a divine nature, far different from that which we received from the first Adam. Now, faith is the uniting grace, whereby Christ dwelleth in us, and we in him, as hath been shewed; and therefore it is the first grace wrought in regeneration, and the means of all the rest: when you truly believe, you are regenerated, and not till then. Those that receive Christ by believing, and those only, are the "sons of God, which are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i. 12, 13.

3. They account it necessary to receive Christ, as their *Lord* and *Lawgiver*, by a sincere resignation of themselves to his government, and a resolution to obey his law, before they receive him as their Saviour. This is one principal lesson of the new divinity, and such a receiving Christ, as Lord, is made to be the great act of saving faith : without which, such faith as I have described, whereby we trust on Christ for salvation is reckoned no better than presumption. They teach, that Christ will not bestow his salvation on those that do not first yield their subjection to his kingly authority ; but he calleth them his *enemies*, because they would not that he should *reign over them*, and requires that they be brought and *slain before them*, Luke xix. 27. I own it is a certain truth, that Christ will save nothing but those that are brought to resign themselves sincerely to the obedience of his royal authority and laws. But yet we must observe, that they are not brought to this holy resignation, or to any sincere purpose and resolution of obedience, before they receive his salvation, but rather by receiving it. Men that were never thoroughly sensible of their natural death in sin, do easily bring themselves to resolve universal obedience to God, when they are on their death-beds, or in any imminent danger, or when they would prepare themselves for the Lord's Supper, that so they may make their peace with God, and trust securely on Christ for his salvation. But all resolutions of that kind are vain and hypocritical, sooner broken than made. Those who know the plague of their own hearts, do find that their mind is *enmity* unto the law of God and Christ, and cannot be *subject* unto it, Rom. viii. 7 ; and that they can as soon remove a mountain, as give up themselves sincerely to obedience, before they trust on Christ for his salvation, and for the gift of a new heart, whereby they may be enabled both to will and to do any thing that is acceptable to God.

We should have been sufficiently obliged to all obedient purposes, resolutions, and resignations, if Christ



had never come into the world to save us : but he knew that we could perform nothing holily, except he made us first partakers of salvation, and that we shall never obey him as a *Lawgiver*, until we receive him as a *Saviour*. He is a saving Lord ; trust on him first to save you from the guilt of power and sin, and dominion of Satan, and to give you a new spiritual disposition ; then, and not till then, the love of Christ will constrain you to resign yourself heartily to *live to him that died for you*, 2 Cor. v. 14 ; and you will be able to say, with an unfeigned resolution, “ O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid : thou hast loosed my bands,” Psal. cxvi. 16.

4. It seemeth to them evident, that some *good works* are necessary, before we can trust on Christ safely for the forgiveness of sin ; because our Saviour teacheth us, that, if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive our trespasses ; and directeth us to pray, “ forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” Mat. vi. 12, 15. Restitution was also to be made of things wrongfully gotten from others, before the sacramental atonement was made by the trespass-offering, Lev. vi. 5, 7. I answer, this is sufficient to prove, that forgiving others, and restitution, according to our ability, or at least a sincere desire and purpose so to do, are very closely joined with the forgiveness of our sins, and are very necessary to fit us for prayer, and for sacramental applications of pardoning grace to ourselves. A lively faith cannot be without these fruits ; and therefore, we cannot pray, or partake of the sacraments, in faith, without them ; but yet, if we strive to do either of these before we trust on Christ for our pardon and salvation, we shall do them slavishly and hypocritically, not in a holy acceptable manner. Our forgiving others will not be accompanied with any hearty love to them as to ourselves, for the sake of God ; and our restitution will be but a forced act, like Pharaoh’s letting the children of Israel go ; or, like Judas’ restoring the thirty pieces of silver, being compelled there-



unto by terror of spirit ; and when the terror that forced us is removed, we shall be as ready to recall our forgiveness, and to wrong others again, as Pharaoh was to bring the Israelites again into bondage, after he had let them go, *Exod. xiv. 5*. If you would forgive others heartily, so as to love them again, you must first, by faith in Christ, apprehend the love and mercy of God towards yourselves, and then you will be able, according to the apostle's instructions, to "be kind, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you," *Eph. iv. 32*. The readiness of Zaccheus to make restitution, followed upon a discovery of Christ's love to him ; and his joyfully receiving Christ into his house, was fruit whereby he evidenced the truth of that faith that was already wrought in his heart.

5. I shall reckon up together *several other qualifications*, that distressed souls would find in themselves, that they may be duly prepared to trust on Christ for their salvation ; and when they have laboured anxiously a long time, and cannot get them, at last they lie down in sorrowful despondence, not daring to apply the consolations of the grace of God in Christ to their wounded consciences. Let perplexed souls mark the particulars, and observe whether the condition of their own souls be reached in any of them. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted," what good qualifications are they that thou wouldst have, that thou mayest be encouraged to lay hold on Christ for salvation ! It is likely thou wilt answer, in the bitterness of thy soul : "O let me have first some love to God and godliness in mine heart, and freedom from mine hateful heart-risings against him and his service ! Let me have some good thoughts of God, his justice, mercy, and holiness, that I may be able to justify him, though he damn me ; and that I may not be filled with murmuring and hellish blasphemies in my mind against him. Let the raging of my lust be abated, and the stinking kennel of my wicked heart a little cleansed.

Let me have some holy reverential fear of God, and not only a panic tormenting horror. I would be more affected with the wrath of God, and not be of a slighting heedless spirit. I would be more humbled for sin, loath it, and be ashamed of, and be sorry for it with a godly sorrow, not merely because of the punishment, but because it grieveth and vexeth the Holy Spirit of God. I would be able to make a willing and ingenious confession of sin, and to pour out my soul to the Lord in lively affectionate prayer for forgiveness, and to praise and glorify him heartily, and not like a lifeless stone in the duty of prayer, as I am." Are these the things thou desirest, O poor distressed soul? The best reply I can make for thy speedy comfort, is to inform thee, that the things are good, but thy desires are not well-timed. It is unreasonable for thee to expect these holy qualifications, whilst thou art in thy natural state, under the guilt of sin, and the apprehensions of the wrath of God, before thou hast received the atonement, and the new spiritual life that is by Christ, through faith in his name. Thou dost but exasperate thy corruption, and harden thy heart, and make thy wounds to stink the more, because of thy foolishness. Such good qualifications are included in the nature of faith, and, for the most part, they follow after it; so that they cannot possibly be obtained before thou trustest on Christ for thy salvation: as I shall shew concerning them particularly in their order.

A love to the salvation of God, and to the free gift of holiness, is included in the nature of faith; so that it cannot be hearty without it. Act faith first, and the apprehension of God's love to thy soul will sweetly allure and constrain thee to love God and his service universally: "We love him, because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19. We cannot be beforehand with God in love; and we must perceive his love, to make us love him: for, if we look upon him as a God contrary to us, that hateth us, and will damn us, our own innate self-love will breed hatred and heart-risings against

him, in spite of our hearts. That love, which is the end of the law, must flow from "faith unfeigned," 1 Tim. i. 5. And, if hatred work in thee more than love, how canst thou expect good thoughts of God, or any other than blaspheming, or, at least, murmuring thoughts of him, in this condition? Ill-will never speaketh or thinketh well. The first right holy thoughts thou canst have of God, are thoughts of his grace and mercy to thy soul in Christ, which are included in the grace of faith. Get these thoughts first by believing in Christ, and they will breed in thee love to God, and all good thoughts of him, and free thee from blasphemous and murmuring thoughts by degrees; for, "love thinks no evil," 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Then wilt thou be able to account God just and merciful, if he had damned thee, and extended his grace to others; and thou wilt be able to think well of his holiness, and of his decrees, which many cannot endure to hear of.

The way to get rid of *raging lusts*, is by *faith*, that "purifieth the heart, and worketh by love," Acts xv. 9. Gal. v. 6. The soul must be brought to take pleasure in God and Christ by faith, or else it will lust after fleshly and worldly pleasures. And the more you strive against lusts without faith, the more they are stirred up, though you prevail so far as to restrain the fulfilling of them. Beg a holy fear of God, with fear of coming short of the promised rest through *unbelief*, Heb. iv. 1. Such a fear is an ingredient of faith, and it will breed in us a reverential, yea, a child-like fear of God and his goodness; Heb. xii. 28. Hosea iii. 5. "We must have grace, whereby we may serve God with reverence." It is in the margin, "we must have, or hold fast grace." And there is no other way to *hold fast grace*, but by faith; and this will quickly calm all panic and tormenting horror.

And if you would be free from *carelessness*, and *slighting the wrath of God*, your way is, first, by believing, to avoid despairing: for people grow careless by despairing; and for their own quiet, they will endeavour to

slight evils which they have no hope to prevent; according to the proverb, "let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die," 1 Cor. xv. 32. True humiliation for sin, is either a part or fruit of faith; for, on our believing, "we shall remember our own evil ways and doings, that were not good, and shall loath ourselves in our own sight, for all our abominations," Ezek. xxxvi. 31. We shall then willingly *renounce* our own righteousness, and "account it but dung, that we may win Christ" by faith, Phil. iii. 7, 8. But beggars will make the most of all their nasty rags, till they be furnished with better cloaths; and cripples will not cast away their crutches, until they have a better support to lean on. Godly sorrow for sin is wrought by believing the pardoning grace of God; as it is found by experience, that a pardon from a prince will sometimes sooner draw tears from a stubborn malefactor, than the fear of a halter will. Thus the sinful woman was brought to wash Christ's feet with her tears, Luke vii. 37, 38. We are not like to be sorry for grieving God with our sins, while we look upon him as an enemy, that will ease himself well enough of his burden, and right himself upon us, by our everlasting destruction.

The belief of God's pardoning and accepting grace, is a necessary means to bring us to an ingenuous confession of sins. The people freely *confessed their sins*, when they were baptized of John in Jordan, "for the remission of sins," Mark i. 4, 5. The confession of despairers is forced, like the extorted confessions and cryings out of malefactors upon the rack. A pardon sooner openeth the mouth of an ingenuous confession, than, *confess, and be hanged; or, confess, and be damned*. Therefore, if we would freely confess our sins, believe first, that "God is faithful and just to forgive your sins" through Christ, 1 John i. 9. And, if you pray to God, or praise him with lively affections, you must first believe that God will hear you, and give you what is best for Christ's sake, John xvi. 23, 24. otherwise your praying will be only from the teeth outward; for, "how

shall they call on him whom they have not believed?" Rom. x. 14. You must first come to Christ, the *altar*, by faith, that *by him*, you may "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually," Heb. xiii. 10, 15.

Finally, 'To pass from particulars, to the general assertion laid down in the Direction; if you ask, *what shall we do, that we may work the works of God*, or get any saving qualifications? I must direct you first to *faith*, as the *work of works*, and the great saving preparatory to all good qualifications, by answering in our Saviour's words, "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent," John vi. 28, 29.

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### DIRECTION VIII.

Be sure to seek for holiness of heart and life only in its due order, where God hath placed it, after union with Christ, justification, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and, in that order, seek it earnestly by faith, as a very necessary part of your salvation.

### EXPLICATION.

I HOPE the reader will observe warily in all these Directions, that the *holiness* aimed at, as the great end in the whole discourse, consisteth not in the *grace* or *act* of faith, required peculiarly by the gospel; which, though it be a saving gift of Christ, yet is here considered rather as a *means* precedent to the reception of Christ, and all his salvation, than a part of his salvation received. But the holiness aimed at, consisteth in *conformity to the whole moral law*, to which we are naturally obliged, if there had never been any gospel, or any such duty as believing in Christ for salvation.

Now, in this Direction, *three* things are contained that are very necessary to guide us to the attainment of this great end; and therefore worthy of our serious consideration.

1. It is a matter of high concern, "to be acquainted with the *due place* and *order* wherein God hath settled this holy practice in the mystery of our salvation; and a great point of christian wisdom to seek it only in that order." We know that God is the *God of order*, and that his infinite wisdom hath appeared, in appointing the order of his creatures, which we are forced to observe for the attainment of our ends in worldly things; so also in spiritual things: "God hath made an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The benefits of it have an orderly dependance upon each other, as links of the same golden chain, though several of them, and a title to them all, are given to us at one and the same time. And I think enough hath been said already, to shew in what order God brings us to the practice of the moral law. He maketh us first to be "in Christ by faith, as branches in the vine," that we may "bring forth much fruit," John xv. 4, 5. He first "purgeth our consciences from dead works" by justification, "that we may serve the living God," Heb. x. 14. He maketh us first to "live in the Spirit," and then to "walk in the Spirit," Gal. v. 25. This is the order prescribed in the gospel, which is *the power of God unto salvation*; though the law prescribeth the quite contrary method, that we should first perform its commands, that so we may be justified and live; and thereby it proveth a *killing letter* to us. Now, mark well the great advantages you have from the attainment of holiness, by seeking it in a right gospel order. You will have the advantage of the love of God manifested towards you, in forgiving your sins, receiving you into favour, and giving you the spirit of adoption, and the hope of his glory, freely, through Christ, to persuade and constrain you, by sweet allurements, to love God again, who hath so dearly loved you, and to love others for his sake, and to give up yourselves to the obedience of all his commands out of hearty love to him; you will also enjoy the help of the Spirit of God, to incline you powerfully unto obedience, and to

strengthen you for the performance of it against all your corruptions, and the temptations of Satan ; so that you will have both wind and tide to forward your voyage in the practice of holiness. Contrariwise, if you rush upon the immediate performance of the law, without taking Christ's righteousness and spirit in the way to it, you will find both wind and tide against you: your guilty consciences, and corrupt dead natures, will certainly defeat and frustrate all your enterprising attempts to love God, and serve him in love, and you will but stir up sinful lusts instead of stirring up yourself to true obedience ; or at best, you will but obtain to some slavish and hypocritical performances. Oh ! that people would be persuaded to consider the due place of holiness in the mystery of salvation, and to seek it only there where they have all the advantages of gospel-grace to find it. Many miscarry in their zealous enterprises for godliness ; and, after they have spent much labour in vain, God maketh a breach upon them, even to their everlasting destruction, as he did upon Uzza, to a temporal destruction ; " because they sought him not after the due order," 1 Chron. xiii. 10.

2. We are to look upon " holiness as a very *necessary part* of that salvation that is received by faith in Christ." Some are so drenched in a covenant of works, that they accuse us for making good works needless to salvation, if we will not acknowledge them to be necessary, either as *conditions* to procure an interest in Christ, or as *preparatives* to fit us for receiving him by faith. And others, when they are taught by the scriptures, that we are *saved by faith, through faith, without works*, do begin to disregard all obedience to the law, as not at all necessary to salvation, and do account themselves obliged to it only in point of gratitude ; if it be wholly neglected, they doubt not but free grace will save them harmless. Yea, some are given up to strong antinomian delusions, that they account it a part of the liberty from the bondage of the law, purchased by the blood of Christ, to make no conscience of breaking the law in their conversation.



One cause of these errors, that are so contrary one to the other, is, that many are prone to imagine nothing else to be meant by salvation, but to be delivered from hell, and to enjoy heavenly happiness and glory: Hence they conclude that, if good works be a means of glorification, and precedent to it, they must also be a precedent means of our whole salvation; and that, if they be not a necessary means of our own salvation, they are not at all necessary to glorification. But though salvation be often taken in scripture, by way of eminency, for its perfection in the state of heavenly glory, yet, according to its full and proper signification, we are to understand by it, all that freedom from the evil of our natural corrupt state, and all those holy and happy enjoyments that we receive from Christ our Saviour, either in this world by faith, or in the world to come by glorification. Thus justification, the gift of the Spirit to dwell in us, the privileges of adoption, are parts of our salvation, which we partake of in this life. Thus also, the conformity of our hearts to the law of God, and the "fruits of righteousness with which we are filled by Jesus Christ," in this life, are a necessary part of our salvation. God saveth us from our sinful uncleanness here, by "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," as well as from hell hereafter, Ezek. xxxvi. 29. Tit. iii. 5. Christ was called Jesus, that is, a *Saviour*, because "he saved his people from their sins," Mat. i. 21. Therefore it is a part of our salvation, to deliver us from our sins; which is begun, in this life, by justification and sanctification, and perfected by glorification in the life to come. Can we rationally doubt, whether it be any proper part of our salvation by Christ, to be quickened, to live to God, when we were *by nature dead in trespasses and sins*; and to have the image of God in holiness and righteousness restored to us, which we lost by the fall; and to be freed from a vile dishonourable slavery to Satan and our own lusts, and made the servants of God; and to be honoured so highly, as to walk by the Spirit, and bring forth

the fruits of the Spirit? and what is all this but holiness in heart and life? Conclude we then, that holiness in this life is absolutely necessary to salvation, not only as a *means* to the end, but by a nobler kind of necessity, as *part* of the end itself. Though we are not saved by good works, as procuring causes, yet we are saved to good works, as fruits and effects of saving grace; “which God hath prepared that we should walk in them,” Eph. ii. 10. It is, indeed, one part of our salvation, to be delivered from the bondage of the covenant of works; but the end of this is, not that we may have liberty to sin (which is the worst of slavery) but that we may fulfil the *royal law* of liberty, and that we may “serve him, in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter,” Gal. v. 13. Rom. vii. 6. Yea, holiness in this life is such a part of our salvation, as is a necessary means to make us “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in heavenly light and glory; without holiness we can never see God,” Heb. xii. 14; and, are as unfit for the glorious presence, as swine for the presence-chamber of an earthly prince. I confess, some may be converted, when they are so near the point of death, that they may have little time to practise holiness in this world: but the grace of the Spirit is active like fire, Mat. iii. 11; and, as soon as it is given, it will immediately produce good inward working of love to God, and Christ, and his people, which will be sufficient to manifest the righteous judgment of God in saving them at the great day, when he shall judge every man according to his work; though some possibly may not have so much time to discover their inward grace in any outward works, as the thief upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 40, 43.

The *third* and *last* thing to be noted in this direction, is, “that holiness of heart and life is to be sought for *earnestly by faith*, as a very necessary part of our salvation.” Great multitudes of ignorant people, that live under the gospel, harden their hearts in sin, and ruin their souls for ever, by trusting on Christ for such an

imaginary salvation, as consisteth not at all in holiness, but only in forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from everlasting torments. They would be free from the punishment due to sin; but they love their lusts so well, that they hate holiness, and would not be saved from the service of sin. The way to oppose this pernicious delusion is, not to deny, as some do, that trusting on Christ for salvation is a saving act of faith; but rather to shew, that none do or can trust on Christ for true salvation, except they trust on him for holiness: neither do they heartily desire true salvation, if they do not desire to be made holy and righteous in their hearts and lives. If ever God and Christ give you salvation, holiness will be one part of it; if Christ *wash you not* from the filth of your sins, “you have no part with him,” John xiii. 8.

What a strange kind of salvation do they desire, that care not for holiness! They would be saved, and yet be altogether dead in sin, aliens from the life of God, bereft of the image of God, deformed by the image of Satan, his slaves and vassals to their own filthy lusts, utterly unmeet for the enjoyment of God in glory. Such a salvation as that was never purchased by the blood of Christ; and those that seek it *abuse the grace of God* in Christ, and *turn it into lasciviousness*. They would be saved by Christ, and yet out of Christ, in a fleshly state; whereas God doth free none from condemnation; but those that are *in Christ, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*; or else they would divide Christ, and take a part of his salvation, and leave out the rest; but, “Christ is not divided,” 1 Cor. i. 13. They would have their sins forgiven, not that they may walk with God in love in time to come, but that they may practise their enmity against him, without any fear of punishment. But, *let them not be deceived, God is not mocked*. They understand not what true salvation is, neither were they ever yet thoroughly sensible of their lost estate, and of the great evil of sin; and that which they trust on Christ for, is but an imagination of their own

brains : and therefore their trusting is gross presumption. True gospel faith maketh us come to Christ with a thirsty appetite, that we may " drink of living water," even of the sanctifying Spirit, John vii. 37, 38 ; and to cry out earnestly to save us, not only from hell, but from sin ; saying, " teach us to do thy will ; thy Spirit is good," Psalm cxliii. 10 ; " turn thou me, and I shall be turned," Jer. xxxi. 18 ; " create in me a clean heart, O God ; and renew a right spirit within me," Psalm li. 10. This is the way whereby the doctrine of salvation by grace doth necessitate us to holiness of life, by constraining us to seek for it by faith in Christ, as a substantial part of that salvation which is freely given us through Christ.

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### DIRECTION IX.

We must first receive the comforts of the Gospel, that we may be able to perform sincerely the duties of the Law.

### EXPLICATION.

SINCE man fell from obedience to God, which he was enabled and engaged to perform by the comforts of his first happy state in paradise, God might have justly refused ever to give man again any comforts beforehand, to encourage him to his duty ; that the way to holiness being hedged up against him with the thorns and briars of fear, grief and despair, he might never be able to escape the sentence of death which was denounced against the first transgression. This justice of God is manifest in the method of the legal covenant, wherein God promiseth us no life, comfort or happiness, until we have thoroughly performed his law ; and may be seen in the mount Sinai promulgation, explicated, Lev. xxxvi. throughout. And we are by nature so strongly addicted to this legal method of salvation, that it is a

hard matter to dissuade those that live under the light of the gospel, from placing the *duties* of the law before the *comforts* of the gospel. If they cannot make salvation itself, yet they will be sure to make all the comforts of it, to depend upon their own works. They think it as unreasonable to expect comfort before duty, as wages before work, or the fruits of the earth, before the husbandman's labour, 2 Tim. ii. 6. They account the only effectual way to secure the obedience we owe to the law of God, is to ground all our comforts on the performance of it; and that the contrary doctrine strengthens the hands of the wicked, "by prophesying peace to them, where there is no peace," Ezek. xiii. 16, 22; and openeth the flood-gates to all licentiousness. Therefore, some preachers will advise men not to be solicitous and hasty of getting comfort, but that they should rather exercise themselves diligently to the performance of their duty; and they tell them, that in so doing, their condition will be safe and happy at last; though they never enjoy any comfort of their salvation, as long as they live in this world.

That you may rightly understand what I have asserted the Direction against such vulgar errors, taking notice, that I do not make the *only* place of gospel-comfort to be *before* the duties of the law. I acknowledge, that God "comforteth his people on every side," Psal. lxxi. 21. both *before* and also *after* the performance of their duty; and that the *greatest* consolations do follow after duty; yet some comforts God giveth to his people beforehand, as advance-money, to furnish them for his service, though most of the pay comes in afterward. Neither do I hereby speak any peace to those that *continue* in their sinful natural state: for the comforts I speak of, cannot be received without rejecting those *false confidences* whereby natural men harden themselves in sin; nor without that effectual working of the Spirit, whereby we are made good trees, that we may bring forth good fruit. Though they are given before the sincere practice of the law; yet they are not given

to us in our corrupt sinful nature, but in and with the new holy nature ; which immediately produceth a holy practice, though it must necessarily go before, as the cause before the effect ; and they are no other than comforts of those spiritual benefits by which our new state and nature is produced, and of which it is constituted and made up ; as the comforts of redemption, justification, adoption, the gift of the Spirit, and the like. Neither do I intend here any transport or ravishment of joy and delight ; but only such manner of comfort, as rationally strengthens, in some measure, against the oppression of fear, grief and despair, which we are liable unto, by reason of our natural sinfulness and misery.

This explanation of the sense of my assertion, is sufficient to answer some common objections against it. And I hope the truth of it will be fully evidenced by the following arguments.

1. This truth is a clear *consectary* from those principles of holiness that have been already confirmed. I have shewed, that we must have a good persuasion of our reconciliation with God, and of our happiness in heaven, and of our sufficient strength, both to will and to do that which is acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ, that we may be *rationally* inclined and bent to the practice of holiness : and that these endowments must be had, by receiving Christ himself, with his Spirit, and all his fulness, by trusting on him for all his salvation, as he is freely promised to us in the gospel ; and that by this faith we do as really receive Christ, as our food by eating and drinking. Now, let right reason judge ; can we be persuaded of the love of God, of our everlasting happiness, and our strength to serve God, and yet be without any comfort ? Can the glad tidings of the gospel of peace be believed, and Christ and his Spirit actually received into the heart, without any relief to the soul from oppressing fear, grief and despair ? Can the salvation of Christ be comfortless, or the bread and water of life without any sweet relish, to those that feed on him, with hungering and thirsting appetites ?

God will not give such benefits as these to those that do not desire and esteem them above the world. And certainly the very receiving of them will be comfortable to such, except they receive them blindfold, which they cannot do, when the very giving and bestowing them, openeth the eyes of a sinner, and turns him from darkness to light, whereby he doth, at least in some measure, see and perceive spiritually the things that concern his present and future peace, and reap some encouraging and strengthening comfort thereby to the practice of holiness.

2. Peace, joy, hope, are recommended to us in scripture, as the *spring* of other holy duties; and fear and oppressing grief forbidden, as hinderances to true religion: "The peace of God keepeth our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ," Phil. iv. 7. "Be not sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength," Neh. viii. 10. "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure," 1 John iii. 3. "Fear not torment: he that feareth is not made perfect in love," 1 John iv. 18. This is the reason why the apostle doubleth the exhortation, to "rejoice in the Lord alway," as a duty of exceeding weight and necessity, Phil. iv. 4. What are such duties, but comfort itself? And can we think that these duties are necessary to our continuance in a holy practice, and yet not to the beginning of it, where the work is most difficult, and encouragement most needful. Therefore we must make haste, in the first place, to get a comfortable frame of spirit, if we would *make haste, and not delay, to keep God's holy commandments*.

3. The usual method of gospel doctrine, as it is delivered to us in the holy scriptures, is, first, to *comfort our hearts*, and thereby to "establish us in every good word and work," 2 Thess. ii. 17. And it appears how clearly this method is adjusted in several epistles, written by the apostles, wherein they first acquaint the churches with the rich grace of God towards them in Christ, and the spiritual blessings which they are made



partakers of, for their strong consolation : and they exhort them to a holy conversation, answerable to such privileges ; and is not only the method of whole epistles, but of many particular exhortations to duty, wherein the comfortable benefits of the grace of God in Christ, are made use of as arguments and motives to stir up the saints to a holy practice : which comfortable benefits must first be believed, and the comfort of them applied to our own souls, or else they will not be forcible to engage us to the practice for which they are intended. To give you a few instances, out of a multitude that might be alleged, we are exhorted to practise holy duties, because “ we are dead to sin, and alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” Rom. vi. 11 ; and because “ sin shall not have dominion over us ; for we are not under the law, but under grace,” Rom. vi. 14 ; because “ we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit ; and God will quicken our mortal bodies, by his Spirit dwelling in us,” Rom. viii. 9—12 ; because “ our bodies are the members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost,” 1 Cor. vi. 15, 16 ; because “ God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2 Cor. v. 21 ; and hath promised, that he “ will dwell in us, and walk in us, and be to us a Father, and we shall be to him sons and daughters,” 2 Cor. vi. 8. with chap. vii. 1 ; because “ God hath forgiven us for Christ’s sake ; and accounteth us his dear children ; and Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us ; and we that were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord,” Eph. iv. 32. and v. 1, 2, 8 ; because “ we are risen with Christ ; and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory,” Col. iii. 1, 4 ; because God hath said, “ I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” Heb. xiii. 5 ; because of “ the many promises made to us,” 2 Cor. vii. 1. Search the scriptures, and you may, with delight, see that this is the vein that runneth through the gospel exhortations, and you may find the like vein of comfort running through the prophetic exhortations in the Old Testament.

Some may object, "that the apostles used this method, in their writings to *saints* who had practised holiness already, that so they might continue and increase therein." But to that I may easily reply, if it be a method needful for grown saints, much more for beginners, that find the work of obedience most difficult, and have most need of strong consolation. And I hope to shew, how we may be able to lay hold of these consolations by faith, in the very first beginning of a holy life. Besides, the gospel proposeth peace and comfort freely to those that are not yet brought to holiness, that, if they have hearts to receive it, they may be converted from sin to righteousness. When the apostles entered into a house, they were first to say, "peace be to this house," Luke x. 5. At their very first preaching to sinners, they acquainted them with "the glad tidings of salvation by Christ," for all that would receive it as a free gift by faith, Acts iii. 26. xiii. 26, 32, 38. xvi. 30, 31. They assured them, if they would but trust heartily on Christ, for all his salvation, they should have it, although they were at present, the chief of sinners; which was comfort sufficient for all that duly esteem spiritual comfort; hungering and thirsting after it. And this is a method agreeable to the design of the gospel, which is, to advance the riches of the grace of God in all our spiritual enjoyments. God will give us his consolations before our good works, as well as after them, that "we may know, that he giveth us everlasting consolations, and good hope through grace," and not through the procurement of our works, 2 Thess. ii. 16.

4. The nature of the duties of the law requireth a *comfortable state* of the soul for the performance of them. I have before proved sufficiently, that they require a persuasion of our reconciliation with God, and of our future happiness, and strength whereby we may be able to walk in holy obedience: Joshua must be strong and very courageous, that he might observe to do according to the law that Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded him, Josh. i. 7. I shall instance

briefly in the *comforts*, without which, several great duties cannot be sincerely performed. Can we love God, and delight in him above all, while we look upon him as our everlasting enemy, and apprehend no love and mercy in him towards us, that may render him a suitable good for us, and lovely in our eyes? What doleful melody will the heart make in the duty of praise, if we account, that all those perfections, for which we praise him, will rather aggravate our misery, than make us happy? What a heartless work will it be to pray to him, and to offer up ourselves to his service, if we have no comfortable hope that he will accept of us? Is it possible for us to free ourselves from carking cares, by casting our care upon the Lord, if we do not apprehend he careth for us? Can we be patient in affliction, with cheerfulness, and under persecutions, except "we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God?" Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. What reason can persuade us to submit willingly, according to our duty, to the stroke of present death, if God be pleased to lay it upon us, when we have no comforts to relieve us against the horrible fear of intolerable torments of hell for ever?

If we should be called to suffer martyrdom for the protestant religion, as our ancestors in England have done, we should find it necessary to abandon the late upstart notions that have been bred in a time of ease, and to embrace the comfortable doctrine of former protestants, which, through the grace of God, made so many courageous and joyful martyrs.

5. The state of those that are to be brought from sin to godliness, requires necessarily, that after they be convinced of the vanity of their former false confidences, and of their deadness in original sin, and subjection to the wrath of God, they should have a supply of *new gospel comforts* afforded to encourage their fainting souls to holy practices. How little do many physicians of souls consider the condition of their unconverted patients, that are altogether without spiritual life or strength, and are or must be convinced thereof? He

that prescribeth bodily exercise to a man lying bed-ridden under a dead palsy, before any effectual means may be used to strengthen him, deserveth the name of a merciless insulting tormentor, rather than a wise and tender-hearted physician. How unreasonable is it to prescribe the immediate practice of love to God, and universal obedience to him out of love, as the means of cure for those that see nothing but wrath and enmity in God towards them in their present condition? What is it but to require a man to work without strength, promising him, that he shall have strength when his work is done? for *comfort* or *joy* is so called, because it “strengtheneth,” Neh. viii. 10. True it is, that the law, which is the *ministration of condemnation*, obligeth them to obedience, but our merciful God expecteth no sincere performance of his law, from such impotent miserable wretches, in order to their salvation by Christ, till he hath first delivered them, in some measure, from those discomforts, slavish fears, and despondences, that hold them captive under the law of sin and death. We may require a strong healthy person, first to work, and then to expect meat, drink and wages; but a fainting, famished person, must first have food, or a reviving cordial, to strengthen his heart, before he can work.

6. Both scripture and experience shew, that this is the method whereby God bringeth his people from *sin* to *holiness*. Though some of them are brought under terrors for a while, that sin may be the more imbibtered, and the salvation of Christ rendered more precious and acceptable to them; yet such are again delivered from their terrors by the comforts of God’s salvation, that they may be fitted for holiness. And, generally, a holy life beginneth with comfort, and is maintained by it. God gave to Adam, at his first creation, the comfort of his love and favour, and the happiness of paradise, to encourage him to obedience; and when he had lost these comforts, by the fall, he was no longer able to obey, until he was restored by new comfort of the promised seed. Christ, the second Adam, set “God

always before his face ;” and he knew, that, because “ God was at his right hand, he should not be moved ;” therefore “ his heart was glad, and his glory rejoiced,” Psal. xvi. 8, 9. This made him willing to bear his agony, and bloody sweat, and to “ be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” God drew the Israelites to obedience, with “ the cords of a man, with the bands of love, by taking off the yoke on their jaws, and laying meat before them,” Hosea xi. 4. David telleth us, for our instruction, how he was brought to a holy conversation : “ Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes ; and I have walked in thy truth,” Psal. xxvi. 3 ; “ Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments,” Psal. cxix. 166. We have several examples in the New Testament of the joy that sinners had in the first receiving of Christ, Acts ii. 41. And, when the gospel first came to the Thessalonians, “ they received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost,” 1 Thess. i. 4, 5, 6. “ When the Gentiles heard the word of God, they were glad ; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed,” Acts xiii. 48. The apostle Paul was constrained, by “ the love of Christ” to give up himself to “ live to Christ,” 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. I dare appeal to the experience of any that obey God out of hearty love. Let them examine themselves, and consider, whether they were brought to give up themselves to serve God in love, without comfortable apprehensions of the love of God towards them ? I dare say, there are no such prodigies in the new birth.

7. What comfortless religion do those make that allow people *no comfort* beforehand, to strengthen them for holy performances, which are very cross, displeasing and grievous to their natural inclinations, as the plucking out a right eye, cutting off a right hand ; but would have them first to do such things with love and delight, under all their present fears, despondences, and corrupt inclinations, and to hope, that by doing the work thoroughly and sincerely, they shall at last attain to a more comfortable state ? All true spiritual com-

fort, as well as salvation, is indeed quite banished out of the world, if it be suspended upon the condition of our good works : which hath already appeared to be the condition of the *law* that *worketh no comfort but wrath*, Rom. iv. 14, 15. This makes the way of godliness odious to many. They think they shall never enjoy a pleasant hour in this world, if they walk in them ; and they had rather comfort themselves with sinful pleasure than have no comfort at all.

Others labour awhile in such a comfortless religion, with inward fretting and repining at the bondage of it, and at last grow weary, and throw off all religion, because they know no better. They that bind such heavy burdens upon men, and grievous to be borne, will plead, that they are not to be blamed, because they do not preach the gospel of God and Christ ; whereas, indeed, they preach a gospel of man's own *forging*, contrary to the nature of the true gospel of Christ, which is " glad tidings of great joy to all people," Luke ii. 10. An uncomfortable gospel cannot proceed from God the Father, who is the " Father of mercies," and the " God of all comfort," 2 Cor. i. 3 ; nor from Christ, who is " the consolation of Israel," Luke ii. 25 ; nor from the Spirit, who is " the comforter," John xiv. 16, 17. God " meeteth him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness," Isa. lxiv. 5. He will be served with *gladness* and *singing* ; as he shewed by the type of variety of music, and great numbers of musicians in the temple, as Christ speaks to us by his gospel, that " his joy may abide in us," and that " our joy may be full," John xv. 11. No sorrow is approved of by God, except *godly sorrow*, which can never be in us without some *comfort of the love of God* towards us. They that are offended at the uncomfortableness of a religious life, never yet knew the true way of religion ; else they would find, that " the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," Prov. iii. 17.

## DIRECTION X.

That we may be prepared by the comforts of the gospel to perform sincerely the duties of the law, we must get some assurance of our salvation, in that very faith whereby Christ himself is received into our hearts: therefore, we must endeavour to believe on Christ confidently, persuading and assuring ourselves, in the act of believing, that God freely giveth to us an interest in Christ and his salvation, according to his gracious promise.

## EXPLICATION.

It is evident, that those comforts of the gospel, that are necessary to a holy practice, cannot be truly received without some *assurance* of our interest in Christ and his salvation; for some of these comforts consist in a good *persuasion* of our reconciliation with God, and of our future heavenly happiness, and of strength both to will and to do that which is acceptable to God through Christ; as hath been before shewed. Hence it will clearly follow, that this assurance is very *necessary*, to enable us for the practice of holiness, as those comforts that must go before the duties of the law, in order of nature, as the cause goeth before the effect, though not in any distance of time. My present work is, to shew what this *assurance* is, that is so *necessary* unto holiness, and which I have here asserted we must act, in that very faith whereby we receive Christ himself into our hearts, even in justifying saving faith.

This doctrine seemeth strange to many that profess themselves protestants of late days; whereas it was formerly highly owned by the chief protestants whom God made use of to restore the purity of the gospel, and to maintain it against the papist for many years. They commonly taught, that "faith was a persuasion or confidence of our own salvation by Christ;" and that we must be sure to apply Christ to ourselves in believing. And this doctrine was one of the great engines whereby they prevailed to overthrow the popish superstition, whereof doubtfulness of salvation is one of the princi-



pal pillars. But many of the successors of those protestants have deserted them, and left their writings to be shamefully insulted by the papists. And this innovation hath been of longer standing amongst us, than several other parts of our new divinity, and maintained by those that profess to abhor that corrupt doctrine which the papists have built upon such principles. Modern divines may think they stand upon the shoulders of their predecessors, whose labours they enjoy, and that they can see farther than they, as the schoolmen might have like thoughts of the ancient fathers; but, for all this, they may not be able to see so far, if the eyes of their predecessors were better enlightened by the Spirit of God, to understand the mystery of the gospel. And why may we not judge that it is so in the present case?

The eyes of men, in these late years, have been blinded in this point of *assurance*, by many false imaginations. They think, because salvation is not promised to us absolutely, but upon condition of believing on Christ for it; therefore we must first believe directly on Christ for our salvation, and, after that, we must reflect in our minds upon our faith, and examine it by several marks and signs, especially by the fruit of sincere obedience; and if, upon this examination, we find out certainly, that it is true saving faith, then, and not before, we may *believe assuredly*, that we in particular shall be saved. On this account, they say that our salvation is by the *direct*, and our assurance by the *reflex* act of faith; and that many have true faith, and shall be saved, that never have any assurance of their salvation as long as they live in this world. They find, by scripture and experience, that many precious saints of God are frequently troubled with doubtings whether they shall be saved, and whether their faith and obedience be sincere, so that they cannot see assurance in themselves; therefore they conclude, that *assurance* must not be accounted *absolutely* necessary to justifying faith and salvation, lest we should make the hearts of doubting saints sad, and drive them to despair.

They account that former protestants were guilty of a manifest absurdity, in making "assurance to be of the nature and definition of saving faith;" because all that hear the gospel are bound to saving faith, and yet they are not bound absolutely to believe that they themselves shall be saved; for then many of them would be bound to believe that which is not declared in the gospel concerning them in particular; yea, that which is a plain lie, because the gospel sheweth, that many of those that are *called*, are not *chosen* to salvation, but *perish* for ever, Mat. xx. 16. No wonder if the appearance of so great an absurdity move many to imagine, that "saving faith is a trusting or resting on Christ as the only sufficient means of salvation, without any assurance; or, that it is a desiring and venturing to trust or rely on him, in a mere state of suspense and uncertainty concerning our salvation, or with a probable opinion or conjectural hope of it at best."

Another *objection* against this doctrine of *assurance*, is, that "it destroyeth self-examination; bringing forth the evil fruits of pride and arrogancy, as if they knew their places in heaven already, before the day of judgment: causeth carelessness of duty, carnal security, all manner of licentiousness." And this maketh them commend doubtfulness of our salvation, as necessary to maintain in us humility, religious fears, watchfulness, much searching and trying our spiritual state and ways, diligence in good works, and all devotion.

Against all these contrary imaginations, I shall endeavour to maintain this ancient protestant doctrine of *assurance*, which I have expressed in the *Direction*. And first, I shall lay down some observations for the right understanding of it, which will be sufficient to turn the edge of the strongest objections that can be made against it.

1. Observe diligently, that the *assurance* directed unto, is *not* a persuasion that we have already received Christ and his salvation, or that we have been *already* brought into a state of grace; but only, that "God is

pleased graciously to give Christ and his salvation unto us, and to bring us into a state of sin and death until this present time :” so that this doctrine doth not at all tend to breed presumption in wicked and unregenerate men, that their state is good *already* ; but only encourageth them to come to Christ *confidently* for a good state. I acknowledge that we may, yea, many must be taught to doubt whether their present state be good ; and that it is humility so to do ; and that we must find out the certainty and sincerity of our faith and obedience by self-examination, before we can have as *well-grounded assurance* that we are in a state of grace and salvation *already* ; and that such an *assurance* belongeth to that which is called the *reflex* act of faith, (if any act of faith can be made of it, it being a spiritual sense of feeling of what is in myself) and is not of the *essence* of that *faith* whereby we are *justified* and *saved* ; and that many precious saints are without it, and subject to many doubts that are contrary to it ; so that they may not know at all that it shall go well with them at the day of judgment ; and that it may be sometimes intermitted, if not wholly lost after it is gotten ; and that we should strive to walk holily, that we may attain to it, because it is very useful to our growth and increase in faith, and in all holiness.

Most protestants among us, when they speak or write of *assurance*, mean only that which is by *reflection*. And I have said enough briefly to shew, that what I assert, is consistent with the doctrine which is commonly received concerning it, and destructive to none of the good fruits of it ; therefore not guilty of those evils that some falsely charge it with. This kind of *assurance* which I speak of, answereth not the question, whether I am already in a state of grace and salvation ? There is another great question that the soul must answer, that it may get into a state of grace, whether God be graciously pleased now to bestow Christ and his salvation upon me, though I have been hitherto a very wicked creature ? We must be sure to resolve this question com-

fortably, by another *kind* of assurance in the *direct* act of faith, wherein we are to persuade ourselves (without reflecting upon any good qualifications in ourselves) that God is ready graciously to receive us into the arms of his saving mercy in Christ, notwithstanding all our former wickedness, according to that gracious promise, "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which were not beloved. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God," Rom. iv. 25, 36.

2. The *assurance* directed unto, is not a *persuasion* of our salvation, *whatever* we do, or *however* we live and walk; but only in a *limited way*, through mere free grace in Christ, by partaking of holiness as well as forgiveness, and by walking in the way of holiness to the enjoyment of the glory of God. We shall not heartily desire or endeavour to *assure* ourselves of such a salvation as this is, if we be not first brought to see our own sinfulness and misery, and to despair of our own righteousness and strength, and to hunger and thirst for the sanctifying as well as the justifying grace of God in Christ; so that we may walk in his ways of holiness, to the enjoyment of the heavenly glory. The faith whereby we receive Christ, must have in it, not only a persuasion of happiness, but these, and the like *good qualifications*, that will make it a most holy faith: Certainly an assurance thus qualified, will not beget any pride in us, but rather humility and self-loathing, except any account it pride, to "rejoice and glory in Christ," when we "have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. It will not destroy religious fear, and breed carnal security, but rather it will make us fear going aside from Christ, our only refuge and security, and *walking after the flesh*. Noah had cause to enter into the ark, and to abide there with assurance of his preservation; yet he might well be afraid to venture out of the ark, because he was persuaded, that continuance in the ark was his only safety from perishing in the

flood. And how can a *persuasion* of salvation, in a way of holiness, breed slothfulness in duty, carelessness, and licentiousness? It doth rather mightily allure, and stir us up to "be always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know, that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58.

They that are persuaded of the free grace of God toward them in Christ, are not, indeed, solicitous about earning their salvation by their own legal works. And Satan is ready to suggest to them, that this is a sinful carelessness, and tendeth to licentiousness. But they that will believe this false suggestion of Satan, shew plainly that they do not yet know what it is to serve God in love, and that they are held in, to all their obedience, by the bit and bridle of slavish fear, "as the horse and mule, that have no understanding," Psal. xxxii. 9.

3. Beware of thinking so highly of this assurance, as if it were *inconsistent* with any doubting in the same soul. A great reason why many protestants have receded from the doctrine of their ancestors in this point, is, because they think there can be no true assurance of salvation in any that are not troubled with *doubtings*, as they find many be, whom they cannot but own as true believers, and precious saints of God. True, indeed, this *assurance* must be *contrary* to *doubtings* in the *nature* of it; and so, if it be *perfect*, in the highest degree, it would exclude *all doubting* out of the soul; and it doth now exclude it in some degree. But, is there not *flesh*, as well as *spirit*, in the best saints on earth? Gal. v. 17. Is there not "a law in their members warring against the law of their minds?" Rom. vii. 23. May not one that truly believeth, say, "Lord, help my unbelief?" Mark x. 24. Can any on earth say, they have received any grace in the *highest degree*, and that they are *wholly* free from the *contrary corruption*? Why then should we think, that assurance cannot be true, except it be perfect, and free the soul from all doubtings? The apostle counts it a great blessing to

the Thessalonians, that they had *much assurance*; intimating, that some *true assurance* might be in a *less degree*, 1 Thess. i. 5. Peter had some *good assurance* of Christ's help; when he walked on the water at Christ's command, and yet he had *some doubtfulness* in him, as his fears shewed, when he saw the wind boisterous. He had some faith contrary to doubting, though it were but little, as Christ's words to him shew: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Matth. xiv. 29, 30, 31. It is strange, if the flesh and the Devil shall never oppose a true assurance, and assault it with doubtings? A believer may be sometimes so overwhelmed with doubtings, that he may not be able to perceive an assurance in himself. He is so far from knowing his place in heaven *already* (as some scoffingly object) that he will say, that he knoweth not *any* assurance that he hath of being there, and needeth diligent self-examination to find it out. Yet, if at that time he can blame his soul for doubting, "why art thou cast down, O my soul? and, why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him," Psal. xlii. 11. If he condemn his doubtings, as sinful, and say with himself, "this is my infirmity," Psal. lxxxvii. 10. these doubtings are of the flesh, and of the Devil; if he still endeavour to call God *Father*, and complain to him, that he doubteth whether he be his Father, and pray that God will give him the assurance of his fatherly love; which he is not sensible of, and dispel those fears and doubtings; I say, that such a one hath some true assurance, though he must strive to grow to a *higher degree*; for, if he were not persuaded of the truth of the love of God towards him, he could not rationally condemn his fears and doubts concerning it as sinful; neither could he rationally pray to God as his Father, or that God would *assure* him of that love that he doth not think it to be true.

Do but grant that it is the nature of saving faith, thus to resist and struggle with slavish *fears* of wrath, and *doubting* of our own salvation; and you grant, in effect,

that there is, and must be something of assurance of our salvation in saving faith, whereby it resisteth doubtings; and you are, in effect, of the same judgment with me in the assertion, however strange my expressions seem to you. If this that I have said concerning our *imperfection* in assurance, as well as other *graces*, were well considered, this ancient protestant doctrine would be freed from much prejudice, and gain *more esteem* among us than it doth.

4. In the last place, let it be well observed, that the reason why we are to assure ourselves in our faith, that “God freely giveth Christ and salvation to us particularly,” is not, because it is a truth *before* we believe it, but because it becometh a certain truth *when* we believe it, and because it never will be true, except we do, in some measure, *persuade* and *assure* ourselves that it is so. We have no absolute promise or declaration in scripture, that God certainly will, or doth give Christ and his salvation to any one of us in *particular*; neither do we know it to be true *already* by scripture, or sense, or reason, *before* we assure ourselves absolutely of it: yea, we are without Christ’s salvation at present, in a state of sin and misery, under the curse and wrath of God. Only I shall prove, that we are bound, by the command of God, thus to assure ourselves: and the scripture doth sufficiently warrant us, that we should not deceive ourselves in *believing a lie*; but, *according to our faith*, so shall it be to us, Matth. ix. 29. This is a strange kind of assurance, far different from other ordinary kinds; and therefore no wonder if it be found weak and imperfect, and difficult to be obtained, and assaulted with many doubtings. We are constrained to believe other things on the clear evidence we have that they are true, and would remain true, whether we believe them or no; so that we cannot deny our assent, without rebelling against the light of our senses, reason, and conscience.

But here our assurance is not impressed on our thoughts by any evidence of the thing; but we must



work it out in ourselves by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and thereby we bring our own thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. None but God can justly require of us this kind of assurance, because he only "callesh those things that are not, as though they were," Rom. iv. 17. He only can give existence to things that yet are not, and make a thing to be true, on our believing it, that was not true before. He only can make good that promise, "what things soever ye desire, when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," Mark xi. 24. "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?" Lam. iii. 37. Therefore, this faith is due to God only, and greatly redoundeth to his glory. Men will often require a believing something like it; as, when one says, "I will forgive your offence, and be your friend, if I can find that you believe it, and that you take me for a friend." But their fallible word is not sufficient ground to make us persuade ourselves absolutely, that we shall have their promised favour. The faith of miracles gives us some light in this matter. Christ assured them on whom they were wrought, and who had power given them of working them, that the miracles should be wrought, if they believed without doubting of the event, Mark xi. 22, 23. And there is a reason for this resemblance; because the end of working miracles, was, to confirm the doctrine of the gospel of salvation by faith in Christ's name, as the scriptures clearly shew; and, indeed, the salvation of a sinner is a very great miracle. It is reported that wizards do often require those that come to them, that they should believe they shall obtain what they desire of them, or at least that they are able to fulfil their desire; whereby the devil, the master of those wizards, sheweth himself to be God's ape, and that he would fain have that honour and glory ascribed to himself that is due to God alone.

Having thus explained the *nature* of that assurance which I have directed unto, I shall now produce seve-

ral arguments, to prove, that "there is, and must necessarily be, such an *assurance* or *persuasion* of salvation in saving faith itself.

1. This *assurance of salvation* is implied in the description before given of that faith whereby we receive Christ and his salvation, into our hearts. I described faith to be a grace of the Spirit, whereby "we heartily believe the gospel, and also believe on Christ, as he is revealed and freely promised to us therein, for all his salvation." And I shewed, in the explanation, that believing on Christ is the same with resting, leaning, staying ourselves on Christ, or God through Christ, for our salvation. It may be, some will like that description the better, because faith was there described by *terms* that are ordinarily used, even by those that deny the *necessity* of assurance; but these ordinary terms do sufficiently include assurance in the *nature of faith*, and they cannot stand without it. And this sheweth, that many hold the doctrine of assurance implicitly, and profess it, though they think the contrary. Believing on Christ for salvation, as freely promised to us, must needs include a dependance on Christ, with a persuasion that salvation shall be freely given, as it is freely promised to us. Believing with a divine faith, grounded on the infallible truth of the promise, if it did not, in some measure, exclude a mere suspense and wavering opinion or conjecture, were not worthy to be so called. Some may be so absurd as to say, that faith is only a believing, that we shall be saved by Christ, if we perform such conditions as he requireth: and then indeed, it will leave us where it found us, as to any certainty of salvation, until those conditions be performed.

But I have already prevented such an absurdity, by shewing, that this believing on Christ is, itself, not only the condition of our salvation, but also the *instrument* whereby we actually receive it. Believing, being the proper act of faith, must needs have the same contraries to it: as *staggering*, Rom. iv. 20; *wavering*, Heb. x. 23; *doubting*, Mat. xiv. 31; *fear*, Mark v. 36.

These contraries do much illustrate the nature of faith ; and do shew, that believing must have some confidence in it ; else it would have doubting in the very nature of it ; for what man, that understandeth the preciousness of his immortal soul, and his danger of losing it, can ever avoid fear, doubting, and trouble of heart, by any believing, whereby he doth not at all assure himself of his salvation ? The other terms of *trusting* and *resting* on Jesus Christ, &c. whereby faith is often described by orthodox teachers, must include assurance of salvation, because they signify the same thing with *believing* on Christ.

The soul must have its sufficient support, to bear it up against oppressing fears, troubles, cares, despair, that it may thus trust and rest. The right manner of trusting and hoping in the Lord is, by assuring ourselves, against all fears and doubtings, that “ the Lord is our God, and he is become our salvation. I trusted on thee, O Lord : I said thou art my God,” Psal. xxxi. 14. “ The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust,” Psal. xviii. 2. “ Behold God is my salvation ; I will trust and not be afraid,” Isa. xii. 2. “ O my soul, hope thou in God, who is the health of my countenance, and my God,” Psal. xlii. 11. True hope is grounded in God only, that *he will bless us*, that he may be an “ anchor for the soul, sure and stedfast,” Heb. vi. 17, 18, 19. If you trust, rely, and stay yourselves on Christ, or hope in him, without assuring yourselves at all of salvation by him, you make no better use of him, than if he were a broken reed : and, if you would stay yourselves on the Lord, you must look upon him as *your God* ; as the prophet teacheth, “ let him trust on the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God,” Isa. l. 10. If you will rest in the Lord, you must believe that he *dealeth bountifully* with you, Psal. cxvi. 7 ; or else, for ought you know, you may make your bed in hell. And you will shew little regard of Christ, and of your soul, if you dare to rest under the wrath of God, without any persuasion of a sure interest in Christ. People may please them-

selves with such a trusting, or resting, &c. when they are at ease; but in time of temptation, it vanisheth away, and appeareth to be no true faith, but is turned into shame. The soul that liveth in such wavering and doubting concerning salvation, doth not stay itself, nor rest at all; but is "like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways," Jam. i. 6. If you continue on the mere suspense and doubtfulness of salvation by Christ, your desire to trust, is but a lazy *woulding*, without any fixed *resolution*, and you dare not yet venture to trust on him stedfastly. If you call it only your *desire* to trust and rely on Jesus Christ, I may answer, that you cannot do this much, in a right manner, except you desire and venture to *persuade* and *assure* yourselves of your salvation by Christ, notwithstanding all the causes that you have to doubt and fear the contrary.

If it be objected, that we may trust on Christ only as a sufficient *means* of salvation, without any *assurance* of the *effect*, I shall acknowledge, that the sufficiency of God and Christ is a good ground for us to rest on: but we must understand by it, not only a *sufficiency* of power, but also of good will and mercy towards us; for what have we to do more with the *sufficiency* of God and Christ's power than fallen angels, without his good will towards us? And if this be truly believed, it will exclude *doubtfulness* concerning your salvation.

2. Several places of scripture declare positively and expressly, that we are to be *assured of our salvation*, in that faith whereby we are justified and saved. I shall produce some instances. We are exhorted to "draw near to God with full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 22. Many apply this text to that which they call the *reflex act of faith*, because they imagine that all assurance must needs be by *reflection*. But the words of the text do clearly teach us to understand it of that *act* of faith whereby we draw near to God; that is, the *direct act*: and it is that very faith whereby the *just do live*, even justifying, saving faith, ver. 38. And this assurance

must be full, at least in the true and proper nature of it, in opposition to mere doubting and uncertainty, though we are further to labour for that which is full in the highest degree of perfection. And the same faith whereby we are exhorted to draw near unto God, and whereby the just liveth, is, a little after, ch. xi. 1. affirmed to be "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." Why should saving faith have these high titles and attributes given to it, if it did not contain in it a sure persuasion of the great things in our salvation hoped for, making them to be evident to the eyes of our mind, as if they were already present in their substance, though yet not visible to our bodily eyes?

That faith whereby we are made partakers of Christ, and to be Christ's house, must be worthy to be called *confidence*, and accompanied with rejoicing hope; "whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence, and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," Heb. iii. 6, 14. What is confidence concerning any thing, but trusting concerning it, with a firm *persuasion* of the truth of it? If we have only a strong opinion concerning a thing, without any absolute certainty, we use to say, that we are not altogether confident of it. The faith whereby we are justified, must be in a measure like to the faith whereby "Abraham, against hope, believed in hope, that his seed should certainly be multiplied according to the promise of God; though by reason of the deadness of his own body, and of Sarah's womb," he could have no evidence from his qualifications to assure himself of it: but all appearances were rather to the contrary; as the apostle teacheth clearly, Rom. iv. 18, 19, 23, 24. As absolutely as this promise was, thus made to Abraham, yet it was not to be fulfilled without this assurance of faith; and, by the like faith, the free promises of salvation by Christ, will be absolutely fulfilled to us.

The apostle James expressly requireth, that we should ask good things of God in faith, *nothing doubting*; which includeth *assurance* manifestly; and he tells us

plainly, that without it a man ought not to think that he shall *receive any thing of the Lord*. Therefore, we may firmly conclude, that without it we shall not receive the salvation of Christ, Jam. i. 6, 7. And that which the apostle James requireth us not to doubt of, is the obtaining the things that we ask; as we may learn from an instruction, to the same purpose, given to us by Christ himself; “what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe ye receive them, and ye shall have them,” Mark xi. 24.

More places of scripture might be alleged to the same purpose: but these are sufficient to evince, that we are to assure ourselves in our salvation in faith itself, or else we are not likely to enjoy it; and that it is not humility, but rather proud disobedience, to live in a state of more suspense and doubtfulness concerning our salvation; and that this *assurance* must be in the *direct act* of faith whereby we are justified and saved. For, as for that which is called the *reflex act* of faith, it is a certain truth, and generally owned, that it is not absolutely necessary to salvation to any; and that it is sinful and pernicious to many to believe, that they are already entered into a state of grace and salvation.

3. God giveth us sufficient ground in scripture to come to Christ with *confident faith*, at the very first; trusting assuredly that Christ and his salvation shall be given to us, without any failing and delay, however vile and sinful our condition hath been hitherto. The scripture speaketh to the vilest sinners in such a manner as if it were framed on purpose to beget assurance of salvation in them immediately, Acts ii. 39. and iii. 26. This promise is universal, that “whoever believeth on Christ, shall not be ashamed,” without making a difference between Jew and Greek, Rom. x. 11, 12. And this promise is confirmed by the blood of Christ, who was given for the world, and lifted up upon the cross for this very end, that “whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John iii. 14, 15, 16. His invitation is free to any; “if any man

thirst, let him come unto me and drink ;” and this drink is promised to every one that believeth, John vii. 37, 39. The command of believing is propounded, not only in general, but in particular ; and the promise of salvation upon believing, is also applied personally, and that to such as have been hitherto in a state of sin and wrath ; as to the wicked, persecuting, self-murdering jailer, Acts xvi. 31. “ Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house.” God commanded them that walked together in sin hitherto to call him their own *Father*, in their very first returning, Jer. iii. 4. So, Hos. ii. 25. “ God will say, thou art my people ; and they will say, thou art my God ;” confidently averring their personal interest in him. God hath joined *confidence* and *salvation* inseparably together ; “ in returning and rest ye shall be saved ; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength,” Isa. xxx. 15.

What a poor slender use and improvement do many make of these discoveries of the rich grace of God towards sinners, who say, that if we see that we have performed the condition of believing, then we may take Christ confidently as our own. They skip over the first principal use they ought to make of them. The very performance of the condition is, to take Christ as our own *immediately*, and to eat and drink him, by believing *confidently* on him for our salvation. If an honest rich man say to a poor woman, “ I promise to be thy husband, if thou wilt have me ; say but the word, and I am thine :” may she not presently answer confidently, “ thou art my husband, and I claim thee for my husband :” and should she not rather say so, than say, “ I believe not what thou sayest ?” If an honest man say, “ do but take this gift, and it is your own ; do but eat and drink, and you are freely welcome :” may I not take the gift, and eat and drink at first, without any farther ado, and with assurance “ that it is mine freely ?” If I do it doubtingly, I disparage the honesty and credit of the donor, as if he were not a man of his word. In like manner, if fearing to be *too* confident, lest we should



believe a lie, we should come to Christ doubtingly, and in mere suspense, whether we should be freely entertained, after all God's free invitations and promises, should we not *disparage* the *faithfulness* of God? And should we not be guilty of making *God a liar*? As the apostle John teacheth, because of our not believing the record which God hath given of his Son: "And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life; and this life is in his Son," 1 John v. 10, 11.

And what if the salvation promised, be not absolutely intended for all to whom the gospel cometh? It is enough, that God giveth us his faithful word, that they that believe shall have it, and none else; and hath absolutely intended to fulfil his word that none shall find it to be a lie to them, and hath joined *believing* and *salvation inseparably together*. On this ground God may justly cause the promise of this salvation to be published to all, and may justly require all to believe on him *assuredly* for their own salvation, that so it may appear whether they will give him the glory of his truth: and if they will not, he may justly reject them, and punish them severely for dishonouring him by their unbelief. In this case, we must not look to the secret decrees of God, but to his revealed promises and commands. Thus God promised to the Israelites in the wilderness, that he would give them the land of Canaan, and would fight for them against their enemies; and required them not to fear or be discouraged, that so the promise might be fulfilled to them; yet God never *absolutely decreed* or *intended*, that those Israelites should enter in; as the event did quickly manifest, Deut. i. 20, 21, 29, 30. Yet, were they not bound, in this case, to trust confidently in God, to give him victory over their enemies, and to give them the possession of the land? had they not sufficient ground for such a faith? was it not just with God to consume them in the wilderness for their unbelief? "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being made of entering into this everlasting rest through Christ, we should come short of it, and fall after the same example of unbelief," Heb. iv. 1, 11.

4. The *professors* of *true godliness*, that we read of through the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, did commonly profess their assurance and persuasion of their interest in God and his salvation, and were directed by the word of God so to do; and true saints had still some assurance of it. And we have no cause to judge, that this assurance was grounded on the certainty of their own *good qualifications*, but rather on the *promises* of God by the direct act of faith. We may judge of the ordinary profession of the frame of spirit that was in the saints, by some instances. I shall begin with the profession that the church made when it was very corrupt, at its first coming out of Egypt, when few of them could assure themselves, by their *good qualifications*, that they were in a state of grace already; which many now imagine to be the *only* way of assurance. Even in that corrupt time, the children of Israel sung that triumphant song of Moses, “the Lord is my strength and my song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God,” *Exod. xv. 2.* Moses taught them in that song, to assure themselves of their own personal interest in the salvation; and he guided them to the practice of their duty. And they did not find fault with Moses, as some do with ministers in these days, for putting them to express more confidence in their song, than they can find ground for from their qualifications; but they applied themselves to the exercise of their faith, agreeably to the song: and, doubtless, this faith was unfeigned in some few of them, though but feigned in others; for it is testified of them, that then “they believed his words, they sang his praise,” *Psal. cvi. 12.* Several other psalms and songs, that were by divine appointment in common use under the Old Testament, are as clear an evidence as we can desire, of that assurance of faith which is commonly professed, and that people were generally bound to, under the Old Testament; as *Psal. xxiii. xxvii. xlv. and xlvi.* Many other psalms, or expressions in psalms, might be alleged. The spirits of few in comparison, could have thoroughly complied

with such psalms, though they were true believers, if all the assurance of the love of God must altogether depend upon the certain knowledge of the sincerity of their own hearts.

We have a great cloud of witnesses together out of the whole history of the Old Testament, Heb. xi. who did, and suffered, and obtained great things by faith; whose examples are produced on purpose that we follow them in believing, to "the saving of our souls," Heb. x. 39. And, if we consider these examples particularly, we shall find, that many of them do evidently guide us to such a saving faith as hath an assurance of the effect contained in the nature of it. I confess we read several times of the fears and doubtings of the saints under the Old Testament; but we read also how they themselves condemned them as contrary to faith, as in the Psalms; Psal. xlii. 11. xxxi. 22. and lxxvii. 7, 10. The most mournful psalm in scripture begins with an expression of some assurance, Psal. lxxxviii. 1. And we may note, that the doubtings that we meet with of the saints of old, were commonly occasioned by some extraordinary affliction, or some heinous transgression; not by common failings, or the common original depravation of nature, or the uncertainty of their election, or any thought that it is humility to doubt, and that they were not really bound to be confident of God's salvation, because then many might be bound to believe a lie. It is hard to find any of these occasions of doubting under the Old Testament, though they are grown so rife among us now under the New Testament.

In the time of the apostles, we may well expect that the assurance of faith grew higher, because the salvation of Christ was revealed, and the Spirit of adoption poured forth plentifully, and the church made free from its former bondage under the terrifying legal covenant. Paul could prove to primitive christians, by appeals to their own experience, that they were the "children and heirs of God, because they had not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption,

whereby they cry, *Abba, Father*," Rom. viii. 15. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits," [or, bearing our spirits witness,] as the Syriac and vulgar Latin render it, and as the like Greek phrase is rendered, Rom. ix. 1. "that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs," Rom. viii. 15, 16, 17. Gal. iv. 6. And the apostle tells the Ephesians, that after they believed, "they were sealed with the Holy Spirit, which was the earnest of their inheritance," Eph. i. 13, 14; *i. e.* they were sealed from the same time that they believed: for the original words are in the same tense. If this witness, seal and earnest of the Spirit had not been ordinary to believers, it would not have been sufficient to prove, that they were the children of God; and such manner of arguing might have driven some to despair, that wanted this witness, seal and earnest.

Let us inquire now, whether the Spirit beareth witness that we are the children of God, and enables us to cry, *Abba, Father*, by the *direct act*, or by that which they call the *reflex act* of faith? For we must not think that it is done by an enthusiasm, without any ordinary means; nor can we reasonably imagine, that no true believers can call God *Father*, by the guidance of the Spirit, but only those few that are so sure of their own sincerity, that by reflecting upon it, they can ground an act of faith concerning their own interest in Christ; no, surely. Therefore we may judge rather, that the Spirit worketh this in us, by giving us saving faith itself, by the direct act of which all true believers are enabled to trust assuredly on Christ for the enjoyment of the adoption of children, and all his salvation according to the free promise of God: and to call God, *Father*, without reflecting on any good qualifications in themselves; for the Spirit is received by the *direct act* of faith, Gal. iii. 2; and so he is the Spirit of adoption, and comfort, to all that receive him. They that assert, that the Spirit witnesseth our adoption, only by assuring us of the sincerity of our faith, love, and other gracious qualifications, and by the *reflex act* of faith, do teach also

commonly, that you must again try, whether the Spirit thus witnessing, be the Spirit of truth, or of delusion, by searching narrowly, whether our inward grace be sincere or counterfeit: so that hereby the testimony of the Spirit is rendered so hard to be discerned, that it standeth us in no stead; but all our assurance is made at last to depend upon our own certain knowledge of our own sincerity.

There are several other evidences to shew, that believers generally were persuaded of the salvation in the apostles time. They *loved* and *waited* for the coming of Christ to judge the world, 1 Cor. i. 7. 2 Tim. iv. 8. They *loved* all the saints for the hope that was laid up for them in heaven, Col. i. 3, 4, 5. The Corinthians, that were very carnal, and but babes in Christ, were persuaded that they should judge the world, and angels, and that their bodies were members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3, 15, 19. The very first coming of the gospel to the Thessalonians, was "in the Holy Ghost, and much assurance;" so that "they received it in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost;" when as yet they had no considerable time to get assurance, by reflecting on their good qualifications, 1 Thess. i. 5, 6. Likewise, the believing Hebrews, when they were illuminated at their conversion, "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance; and this was their confidence, which they were not to cast off, because the just liveth by faith." And therefore it appeareth, that this confidence belongeth necessarily to justifying saving faith, Heb. x. 34, 35, 38.

Now, let those that allege the examples or experience of many modern christians, to disprove all that I have asserted, consider well whether these are fit to be laid in the balance against all the scripture examples and experience that I have produced out of the Old and New Testament. I confess, that assurance of salvation is more rarely professed by christians in these times

than formerly : and we may thank some teachers for it, that have deserted the doctrine of former protestants in this point, and vented against it several errors, such as have been already named ; and now would take advantage to confirm the truth of their doctrine from those doubtings in christians, that have been chiefly occasioned by it. But, however, the nature of saving faith is still the same. And I assert, that, in these days, as well as formerly, it always hath in it some assurance of salvation by Christ, which doth and will appear, at least in resisting and condemning all doubtings, and praying against them, and endeavouring to trust assuredly, and to call God, *Father* ; except in extraordinary desertions, by which our case must not be tried. We are not to trust to the judgment of many concerning themselves. They will judge falsely, that they have no assurance at all, because they know not yet, by marks and signs, that they are in a state of grace already, or because they think that there is no assurance when there are many doubtings, and because it is so weak, and so much oppressed with doubting, that it can hardly be discerned, as life in a fainting fit. But, if their judgments be better informed, they may be brought to discern some assurance in themselves. We are also to take heed of mistaking those for true believers, that are not so, and of judging this point by their experiences ; which is a vulgar error. The blind charity of some moveth them to take all for true believers who are full of doubts and troubles concerning their salvation, though it may be they only are convinced of sin, and brought to some zeal of God that is not according to the knowledge of the way of salvation by Christ ; and they think it duty to comfort such ignorant persons, by persuading them, that their state is good, and their faith right, though they have no assurance of salvation. Thus they are brought to judge falsely concerning the nature of faith, out of their blind charity to such as are yet in ignorance and unbelief ; and, instead of comforting such, they rather take the direct way to harden them in their natural

state, and to divert them from seeking consolation by saving faith in Christ, and to ruin their souls for ever.

5. The chief office of this faith, in its direct saving act, is to *receive Christ and his salvation* actually into our hearts, as hath been proved ; which office cannot be rationally performed, except we do, in some measure, persuade our hearts, and assure ourselves, in the enjoyment of him. As the body receiveth things into itself by the hands and mouth, so the soul receiveth these things to itself, and layeth actual hold on them, by the faculty of the will, maketh choice of them, and embracing them in a way of present enjoyment and possession, as it doth by the faculty of the understanding, see and apprehend them. Thus the soul receiveth comfort from outward things ; as a righteous person cannot receive inward comfort from outward things, as from worldly estate, wife, husband, friends, &c. except he choose them as good, and account them his own by a right and title. This is the only rational way whereby the soul can actively lay hold on Christ, and take actual possession of him, and his salvation, as he is freely offered and promised to us in the gospel, by the grace of faith, which God hath appointed to be our great instrument for the receiving of him, and closing with him. If we do not make choice of Christ as our only salvation and happiness, or if we be altogether in a state of suspense, and doubting whether God will be pleased to give Christ to us or no, it is evident, that our souls are quite loose from Christ, and have no holdfast or enjoyment of him. They do not so much as pretend to any actual receiving, or laying hold, or choosing of him, neither are they fully satisfied that it is lawful for them so to do : but rather they are yet to seek, whether they have any good ground or right to lay hold on him or no.

Let any rational man judge, whether the soul doth, or can put forth any sufficient act for the reception and enjoyment of Christ, as its Saviour, head, or husband, while it is yet in doubt, whether it be the will of Christ to be joined with it in such a near relation ? Can a w



man honestly receive any one as her husband, without being assured that he is fully willing to be her husband? The same may be said concerning the several parts of Christ's salvation, which are to be received by faith. It is evident, that we do not aright receive the benefit of remission of sins, for the purging of our consciences from that guilt that lieth upon them, unless we had an assured persuasion of God's forgiving them. We do not actually receive into our hearts, our reconciliation with God, and adoption of children, and the title to an everlasting inheritance, until we can assure ourselves, that God is graciously pleased to be our God and Father, and to take us to be his children and heirs. We do not actually receive any sufficient strength to encourage our hearts to holiness in all difficulties, until we can stedfastly believe, that God is with us, and will not fail nor forsake us.

Hence then we may firmly conclude, that whosoever seeketh to be saved by faith, and doth not seek to have assurance or confidence of his own salvation, doth but deceive himself, and delude his soul with a mere fancy instead of saving faith, and doth in effect, seek to be saved in his corrupt natural state, without receiving, and laying actual hold of the Lord Jesus Christ and his salvation.

6. It is also a great and necessary office of saving faith, to *purify the heart*, and to enable us to live and walk in the practice of all holy duties, by the grace of Christ, and by Christ himself living in us, as hath been shewed before; which office faith is not able to perform, except some assurance of our own interest in Christ, and his salvation, be comprehended in the nature of it. If we would live to God, not to ourselves, but by Christ living in us, according to Paul's example, we must be able to assure ourselves as he did, "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. We are taught, that, "if we live in the Spirit, we should walk in the Spirit," Gal. v. 25. It would be high presumption if we should endeavour to walk above our natural strength

and power by the Spirit, before we have made sure of our living by the Spirit. I have shewed, that we cannot make use of the comfortable benefits of the saving grace of Christ, whereby the gospel doth engage and encourage us to a holy practice, except we have some confidence of our own interest in those saving benefits. If we do not assuredly believe, that we are dead to sin, and alive to God through Christ, and risen with Christ, and not under the law, but under grace, and members of Christ's body, the temple of his Spirit, the dear children of God, it would be hypocrisy to serve God upon the account of such privileges as if we reckoned ourselves to be partakers of them. He that thinks he should doubt of his salvation, is not a fit disciple for this manner of doctrine; and he may reply to the preachers of the gospel, if you would bring me to holiness, you must make use of other more effectual arguments; for I cannot practise upon these principles, because I have not faith enough to believe, that I have any interest in them. Some arguments taken from the justice and wrath of God against sinners, and his mercy towards those that perform the condition of sincere obedience, would work more powerfully upon me. O what a miserable worthless kind of saving faith is this, that cannot fit a believer to practise in a gospel manner, upon the most pure and powerful principles of grace, but rather leaveth him to work upon legal principles, which can never bring him to serve God acceptably out of love! And as such a faith faileth wholly in the right manner of obeying, upon gospel principles, so it faileth also in the very matter of some great duties, which are of such a nature, that they include assurance of God's love in the right performance of them; such are those great duties of peace with God; rejoicing in the Lord always; hope that maketh not ashamed; owning the Lord as our God and our Saviour; praying to him as our Father in heaven; offering up body and soul as an acceptable sacrifice to him; casting all our cares of body and soul upon him; contentment and hearty

thanksgiving in every condition ; making our boast in the Lord ; triumphing in his praise ; rejoicing in tribulation ; putting on Christ in our baptism ; receiving Christ's body as broken for us, and his blood shed for us in the Lord's Supper ; committing our souls willingly to God as our Redeemer, when he shall be pleased to call for us ; loving Christ's second appearance, and looking for it as that blessed hope. When we fall into any sudden doubting whether we are in a state of grace already ; when we are called to any present undertaking, to partake of the Lord's Supper, or any duty that requires assurance to the right performance of it, we must relieve ourselves, by trusting confidently in Christ for the present gift of his salvation, or else we shall be driven to omit the duty, or not to perform it rightly or sincerely. Can we judge ourselves already in a state of grace, by the *reflex* act of faith, if we do not find, that we perform these duties, at least several of them, sincerely ; or, if we do not find, that we have such a holy faith as doth fully enable, or incline us to the performance of them ? And can we be thus enabled and inclined by any faith that is without some *true assurance* of our salvation ? Therefore, I conclude, that we must necessarily have some assurance of our salvation in the *direct* act of faith, whereby we are justified, sanctified and saved, before we can, upon any good ground, assure ourselves, that we are already in a state of grace, by that which we call the *reflex* act.

Give me such a saving faith as will produce such fruits as these. No other faith will *work by love* ; and therefore will not avail to salvation in Christ, Gal. v. 6. The apostle James putteth thee upon shewing thy " faith by thy works," James ii. 18. And in this trial, this faith of assurance cometh off with high praise and honour. When God called his people to work outward miracles by it, all things have been possible to them ; and it hath frequently brought forth such works of righteousness, as may be deservedly esteemed great spiritual miracles. From hence hath proceeded that heroic fortitude of the

people of God, whereby their absolute obedience to God hath shined forth in doing and suffering those great things which are recorded in the holy scriptures, and in the histories of the church. And, if we be ever called to the fiery trial, as protestants formerly were, we shall find their doctrine of assurance will encourage us in suffering for the sake of Christ.

7. The *contrary* doctrine, which excludeth assurance of the nature of saving faith, bringeth forth *many evil fruits*. It tendeth to bereave our souls of all assurance of our salvation, and solid comfort, which is the life of religion, by placing them after sincere universal obedience; whereas, if we have them not first, we can never attain to this obedience, nor to any assurance that dependeth on it, as hath been proved. And this, as far as it prevails, makes us subject to continual doubtings concerning our salvation, and to tormenting fears of wrath, which casteth out true love to God, and can produce no better than slavish hypocritical service. It is one of the principal pillars whereby manifold superstitions in popery are supported, as their monkish orders, their satisfactions for sin, by works of penance, bodily macerations, whippings, pilgrimages, indulgences, trusting on the merit of saints, &c. When once men have lost the knowledge of the right way to assure themselves of salvation, they will catch at any straw, to avoid drowning in the gulph of despair.

There is no way to administer any solid comfort to the wounded spirits of those that see themselves void of all holiness, under the wrath and curse of God, dead in sin, not able so much as to think a good thought. You do but increase their terror and anguish, if you tell them, they must first get faith and obedience; and, when they find they have done that, they may persuade themselves, that God will receive them into his grace and favour. Alas! they know that they cannot believe nor obey, except God assist them with his grace and favour. And what if they be even at the point of death, and struggling with death's pangs, so that they have no

time or leisure to get good qualifications, and examine the goodness of them. You must have a more speedy way to comfort such, by discovering to them the free promise of salvation to the worst of sinners by faith in Christ, and by exhorting them to apply those promises, and trust on Christ confidently for remission of sins, holiness, and glory: assuring them also, that God will help them to believe sincerely on Christ, if they desire it with all their hearts; and that it is their duty to believe, because God commands it.

Several other evils are occasioned by the same doctrine. Men are unwilling to know the worst of themselves, and prone to think their qualifications better than they are, that they may avoid despair. Others please and content themselves without any assurance of their interest in Christ, because they think that it is not necessary to salvation, and that but few attain to it: and in this they shew little love to Christ, or to their own souls. Some foster doubtings of salvation as signs of humility, though they will hypocritically complain of them. Many spend their time in poring upon their own hearts, to find out some evidence of their interest in Christ, when they should rather be employed in receiving Christ and walking in him, by a confident faith.

Some are troubled with doubts whether they should call God, *Father*, and what apprehensions they should have of him in prayer; and are offended at ministers, that, in their public prayers, use any expressions that the people cannot join in; as when they do own God as their God and Father, and Christ as their Saviour: and upon the same account they are offended at the public singing of many of David's Psalms; and avoid partaking of the Lord's Supper, because they are not satisfied about their interest in Christ.

Though true believers have some assurance of salvation on saying faith itself, yet it is much weakened in many by this contrary doctrine, assaulted with many doubtings; and then other good qualifications must needs be low and weak together with it, and so obscure,

that it is very hard to discern them. How hard a thing then will it be for true believers to assure themselves, by the certain knowledge of their own sincerity, that they are in a state of grace already, which some say is the only assurance of faith? Some prescribe such marks and signs to distinguish sincerity from hypocrisy, that believers cannot sufficiently try themselves by them, except they have more knowledge and experience than ordinary.

Thus many believers walk heavily in the bitterness of their souls, conflicting with fears and doubtings all their days. And this is the cause that they have so little courage and fervency of spirit in the ways of God, and that they so much mind earthly things, and are so afraid of sufferings and death; and if they get assurance by the *reflex* act of faith, they often soon lose it again by sins and temptations. The way to avoid these evils, is to get your *assurance*, and to maintain it, and renew it upon all occasions by the *direct* act of faith, by *trusting* assuredly “on the name of the Lord, and staying yourself upon your God, when you walk in darkness, and see no light,” in any of your own qualifications, Isa. l. 10. I doubt not but the experience of choice christians will bear witness to this truth.

## DIRECTION XI.

Endeavour diligently to perform the great work of believing on Christ, in a right manner, without any delay; and then also continue and increase in your most holy faith; that so your enjoyment of Christ, union and fellowship with him, and all holiness by him, may be begun, continued and increased in you.

## EXPLICATION.

HAVING already discovered to you the powerful and effectual *means* of a holy practice, my remaining work is, to lead you to the *actual exercise* and *improvement* of them, for the immediate attainment of the end.

And, I think, it may be clearly perceived by the foregoing Directions, that *faith in Christ* is the duty with which a holy life is to begin, and by which the foundation of all other holy duties is laid in the soul.

It is before sufficiently proved, that Christ himself, with all endowments necessary to enable us to a holy practice, is received actually into our hearts by *faith*. This is the uniting grace, whereby the Spirit of God knitteth the knot of mystical marriage between Christ and us, and maketh us branches of that noble vine; members of that body, joined to that excellent head; living stones of that spiritual temple, built upon the precious living corner stone and sure foundation; partakers of the bread and drink that came down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. This is the grace whereby we pass from our corrupt *natural state*, to a *new holy state* in Christ; also from *death* in sin, to the *life* of righteousness; and whereby we are comforted, that so we may be *established in every good word and work*.

If we put the question, "what must we do that we may work the works of God?" Christ resolveth it, that we "believe on him whom he hath sent," John vi. 28, 29. He putteth us *first* upon the work of *believing*, which is the *work of God*, by way of eminency, the *work of works*, because all other good works proceed from it.

The FIRST thing in the present Direction, is, to put you upon the *performance* of this great work of believing on Christ, and to *guide* you therein; for, you are to consider distinctly *four things* contained in it.

1. The *first* is, you are to make it your *diligent endeavour* to perform the great work of *believing* on Christ. Many make little conscience of this duty. It is not known by natural light, as many moral duties are, but only by supernatural revelation in the gospel; and it is *foolishness* to the natural man. These are sometimes terrified with apprehensions of other sins, and will examine themselves concerning them: and, it may be, will write them down, to help their memories and devotion. But the *great sin* of *not believing* on Christ, is seldom



thought of in their self-examinations, or registered in the large catalogues of their sins. And even those who are convinced, that believing on Christ is a duty necessary to salvation, do neglect all diligent endeavours to perform it: either because they account that it is a motion on the heart which may be easily performed at any time, without any labour or diligent endeavours; or, on the contrary, because they account it as difficult as all the works of the law, and utterly impossible for them to perform by their most diligent endeavours, except the Spirit of God work it in them by his mighty power; and that therefore it is in vain for them to work, until they feel this working of the Spirit in their hearts; or, because they account it a duty so peculiar to the elect, that it would be presumption for them to endeavour the performance of it, until they know themselves to be elected to eternal life through Christ. I shall urge you to a diligent performance of this duty, notwithstanding these impediments, by the following consideration. It is worthy our best endeavours, as appeareth by the *preciousness, excellency and necessity* of it already discovered.

If the light of nature were not darkened in the matters of salvation, it would shew us, that we cannot of ourselves find out the way of salvation, and would condemn these that despise that revelation of the way of salvation that God hath given us in the gospel, declared in the holy scriptures. The great end of preaching the gospel, is for "the obedience of faith," Rom. i. 5; that so we may be brought to Christ, and all other obedience. Yea, the great end of all revealed doctrines in the whole scripture, is, to "make us wise unto salvation by faith that is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15. The *end of the law given by Moses*, was for "righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4; and *Christ* was that *end for righteousness*. The moral law itself was revealed, in order to our salvation by believing on Christ; or else the knowledge of it had nothing availed fallen man, that was unable to perform it. Therefore, they that slight the duty of believing, and account it

foolishness, do thereby slight, despise and vilify the whole counsel of God revealed in the scripture. The law and the gospel, and Christ himself, are become of *none effect* to the salvation of such. The only fruit that such a one can attain to, by all the saving doctrines of the scriptures, is only some *hypocritical moral duties*, and *slavish performances*, which will be as *filthy rags*, in the sight of God, in the great day. However, many mind not the sin of unbelief in their self-examinations, and write it not in their scrolls; yet, let them know, that this is the most *pernicious sin* of all. *All* the sins in their scrolls would not prevail in their condemnation; yea, they would not prevail in their conversation, were it not for their unbelief. This one sin prevailing, maketh it *impossible* for them to please God in any duty whatsoever, Heb. xi. 6. If you will not mind this *one main sin* now, God will at last mind you of it with a vengeance: for, "he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii. 37. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

2. *Believing on Christ*, is a work that will require diligent *endeavour* and *labour* for the performance of it. We must "labour to enter into that rest, lest any man fall by unbelief," Heb. iv. 11. "We must shew diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end, that we may be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," Heb. vi. 11, 12. It is a work that requireth the exercise of *might* and *power*; and therefore we have need to "be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith," Eph. iii. 16, 17. I confess, it is easy, pleasant and delicious in its own nature, because it is a motion of the heart, without any cumbersome bodily labour; and it is a taking Christ and his salvation as *our own*, which is very comfortable and delightful; and the soul is carried forth in this, by love to

Christ and its own happiness, which is an affection that maketh even hard works easy and pleasant: yet it is made difficult to us, by reason of the opposition that it meets with from our own inward corruptions, and from Satan's temptations.

It is no *easy* matter to receive Christ, as our happiness and free salvation, with true confidence and lively affection, when the guilt of sin lieth heavily upon the conscience, and the wrath of God is manifested by the word and terrible judgments; especially when we have been long accustomed to seek salvation by the procurement of our own works, and to account the way of salvation by free grace, foolish and pernicious; when our lusts incline us strongly to the things of the flesh and the world; when Satan doth his utmost, by his own suggestions, and by false teachers, and by wordly allurements and terrors, to hinder the sincere performance of this duty.

Many works that are easy in their own nature, prove difficult for us to perform in our circumstances. To forgive our enemies, and to love them as ourselves, is but a motion of the mind, easy to be performed in its own nature; and yet many that are convinced of their duty, find it a hard matter to bring their hearts to the performance of it. It is but a motion of the mind, to cast our care upon him for wordly things, and rich men may think they can do it easily; but poor men that have great families, find it a hard matter. That easy comfortable duty, which Moses exhorted the Israelites to, when Pharaoh, with his chariots and horsemen overtook them at the Red Sea, "fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew to you to-day," *Exod. xiv. 13.* was not easily performed. The very easiness of some duties makes their performance difficult; as Naaman the Syrian was hardly brought to *wash and be clean*, because he thought it to be too slight and easy a remedy for the cure of his leprosy, *2 Kings v. 12, 13.* Even in this very case, people are offended at the duty of *believing on Christ*, as too slight

and easy a remedy to cure the leprosy of the soul; they would have some harder thing enjoined them, to the attainment of so great an end as this everlasting salvation. The performance of all the moral law is not accounted work enough for this end, *Matth. xix. 17, 20.*

However easy the work of *believing* seemeth to many, yet common experience hath shewed, that men are more easily brought to the most burdensome, unreasonable, and inhuman observations; as the Jews and Christian Galatians were more easily brought to take upon their necks the yoke of Moses' law, which none were *able to bear*, *Acts xv. 10.* The heathens were more easily brought to burn their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods, *Deut. xii. 31.* The papists are brought more easily to their vows of chastity and poverty, and obedience to the most rigorous rules of monastic discipline; to macerate and torture their bodies with fastings, scourgings and pilgrimage; and to bear all the excessive tyranny of the papal hierarchy, in a multitude of burdensome, superstitious and ridiculous devotions. They that slight the work of *faith* for its easiness, shew, that they were never yet made sensible of innumerable sins, and the terrible curse of the law and wrath of God that they lie under; and of the darkness and vanity of their minds, the corruption and hardness of their hearts, and their bondage under the power of sin and Satan; and have not been truly humbled; without which they cannot believe in a right manner. Many sound believers have found by experience, that it hath been a very hard matter to bring their hearts to the duty of *believing*; it hath cost them vigorous struggles and sharp conflicts with their own corruptions, and Satan's temptations. It is so *difficult* a work; that we cannot perform it without the mighty working of the Spirit of God in our hearts, who only can make it to be absolutely easy to us, and doth make it easy, or suffer it to be difficult, according as he pleased to communicate his grace in *various degrees* unto our souls.

3. Though we cannot possibly perform this great work in a *right manner*, until the Spirit of God *work faith* in our hearts by his mighty power; yet it is necessary that we should *endeavour* it: and that before we can find the Spirit of God *working* faith effectually in us, or giving us strength to believe. We can perform no holy duty *acceptably*, except the Spirit of God *work* it in us; and yet we are not hereby excused from working ourselves, but we are the rather stirred up to the greater diligence; “work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” Phil. ii. 12. The way whereby the Spirit works truth in the elect, is by stirring them up to endeavour to believe. And this is the way suitable to the means that the Spirit useth; *i. e.* the exhortations, commands, and invitations of the gospel; which would be of *no force*, if we were not to obey them, until we find faith *already* wrought in us. Neither can we possibly find, that the Spirit of God doth effectually *work* faith, or give strength to believe, *until* we *act* it; for all inward graces, as well as all other inward habits, are discerned by their acts, as seed in the ground by its springing. We cannot see any such thing as *love* to God or man in our hearts *before* we *act* it. Children know not their ability to stand upon their feet, until they have made trial, by endeavouring so to do; so we know not our spiritual *strength*, until we have learned by experience from the use and exercise of it. Neither can we know, or assure ourselves absolutely, that the Spirit of God will give us strength to *believe*, *before* we *act* faith; for such a knowledge and assurance, if it be right, is saving faith itself in part; and whosoever trusteth on Christ *assuredly* for strength to believe by his Spirit, doth, in effect, trust on Christ for his own salvation, which is inseparably joined with the grace of saving faith. Though the Spirit worketh other duties in us by faith; yet he worketh faith in us immediately by hearing, knowing, and understanding the word: “faith cometh by hear-

ing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 17. And, in the word, he maketh no absolute promise or declaration, that he will work faith in this or that unbelieving heart, or that he will give strength to believe *to any one in particular*; or begin the work of believing in Christ; for, faith itself is the first grace whereby we have a particular interest in any saving promise. It is a thing hidden in the secret counsel and purpose of God concerning us, whether he will give us his Spirit and saving faith, *until* our election be discovered by our believing actually. Therefore, *as soon* as we know the duty of believing, we are to apply ourselves *directly* to the vigorous performance of the duty; and, in so doing, we shall find, that the Spirit of Christ hath strengthened us to believe, though we know not *certainly*, that he will do it beforehand. The Spirit cometh indiscernably upon the elect to work faith in them; like the wind that bloweth where it lists, and none knoweth whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, but only we hear the sound of it, and thereby know it, when it is past and gone, John iii. 8.

We must therefore first *begin* the work, *before* we know, that the Spirit doth, or will work in us savingly; and we shall be willing to set upon the work, if we be Christ's people; for, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," Psal. cx. 3. It is enough that God discovereth beforehand, in the gospel, what *faith* is, and the *ground* we have to believe on Christ for our own salvation; and that God requireth this duty of us, and will help us in the performance of it, if we apply ourselves heartily thereunto: "fear not, I command thee; be strong, and of good courage," Josh. i. 6. "Arise, and be doing; and the Lord will be with thee," 1 Chron. xxii. 16. Therefore, whoso receiveth this gospel discovery, as the word of God, in hearty love, is taught by the Spirit, and will certainly "come to Christ by believing," John vi. 45. Every one that receiveth it not, despiseth God, maketh him a liar, and deserveth justly to perish for his unbelief.

4. Though the Spirit worketh saving faith only in the elect, and others believe not, because they are not of *Christ's sheep*, John x. 26; and, on that account, it is called the "faith of God's elect," 1 Tit. i. 1; yet all that hear the gospel, are *obliged* to the duty of believing, as well as to all the duties of the moral law, and that *before* they know their election: and they are liable to condemnation for *unbelief*, as well as for any other sin: "he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God," John iii. 18. The apostle Paul sheweth, that the elect Israelites obtained salvation, and the rest that were not elected, were blinded; and yet even these were "broken off from the good olive-tree," because of their *unbelief*, Rom. xi. 7, 23. We cannot have a *certain* knowledge of our election to eternal life *before* we do believe; it is a thing hidden in the unsearchable counsel of God, until it be manifest by our effectual calling, and believing on Christ. The apostle knew the election of the Thessalonians, by finding the evidence of their faith, that *the gospel came to them*, not in word *only*, but also "in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; and that they had received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost," 1 Thess. i. 4, 5, 6. We are to see our *calling*, if we would find out, that God hath *chosen us*, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Therefore, we must believe on Christ before we know our election, or else we shall never know it, and shall never believe. And it is no presumption for us to trust confidently on Christ, for everlasting life, *before* we have any good evidence of our election; because God, that cannot lie, hath made a general promise, "that whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," without making the least difference amongst them that perform this duty, Rom. x. 11, 12. The promise is as firm, and sure to be fulfilled, as any of God's decrees and purposes; and therefore it is a good and sufficient *ground* for our confidence. It is certain, that all that the Father hath given to Christ, by the decree of



eternal election, shall come to Christ; and it is as really certain, that "Christ will in no wise cast out any that cometh to him," whosoever he be, John vi. 37. And we need not fear, that we shall *infringe* God's decree of election, by believing on Christ confidently for our salvation, before we know what God hath decreed concerning us; for, if we believe, we shall at last be found among the number of the elect; and, if we refuse to believe, we shall thereby wilfully sort ourselves among the reprobates, "that stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they are appointed," 1 Pet. ii. 8.

I shall add further, that though we have no evidence of our particular election before we believe; yet we are to trust on Christ assuredly, to make it evident to us, by giving us that salvation which is the peculiar portion of the elect only. All spiritual saving blessings, wherewith God blesseth his people in Christ, are the peculiar portion of them whom "God hath chosen, in Christ, before the foundation of the world," Eph. i. 3, 4; yet we must necessarily trust on Christ for those saving blessings, or have none at all. We are to pray in faith, nothing doubting, that God will "remember us with the favour that he beareth to his people; that we may see the good of his chosen, and glory with his inheritance," Psal. cvi. 4, 5. Therefore we art to trust assuredly on God, that he will deal with us as his chosen people. Thus it appeareth that it is not presumption, but *your bounden duty*, to apply yourselves to the great work of *believing* on Christ for salvation, without questioning at all beforehand, whether you are elected or no: "Secret things belong to God, but those things that are revealed, belong unto us, that we may do them," Deut. xxix. 29.

The SECOND thing *directed* to is, that you shall endeavour for a *right manner* of performing this duty. This is a point of great concernment, because the want of it will render your faith ineffectual to sanctification and salvation. The great duty of *love*, which is the *end of the law*, and the principal fruit of sanctification, must

flow from *faith unfeigned*, 1 Tim. i. 5. There is a *feigned* faith, that doth not really receive Christ into the heart, and will not produce love, or any true obedience; such as Simon Magus had, Acts viii. 13, 23; for, notwithstanding his faith, he was in “the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity;” and such as those Jews had, to whom Christ would not *commit himself*, who “did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue,” John ii. 23. and xii. 42; and such as the apostle James speaks of, “what doth it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can that faith save him? The devils also believe and tremble,” James ii. 14, 19. Take heed, therefore, lest you deceive your own souls with a *counterfeit faith*, instead of the *precious faith of God’s elect*.

The way to distinguish the one from the other, is, by considering well what is the *right manner* of that believing which is effectual to salvation. Hypocrites may perform the same works for the *matter*, with true saints; but they are defective in the *manner* of performance, wherein the excellency of the work doth chiefly consist. One great reason why many “seek to enter in at the strait gate, and are not able,” Luke xiii. 24. is, because they are ignorant and defective in the *right manner* of acting this faith whereby we are to enter. Now, I confess, that God is only able to guide us effectually in the right way of believing. And we have this great consolation, when we see our own folly and proneness to mistake our way, and if we heartily desire and endeavour to believe on Christ *aright*, we may confidently trust on Christ to *guide* us. God hath promised, that “the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err” in the way of holiness; and that “he will teach sinners” in the way; the meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way,” Psal. xxv. 8, 9; and he commandeth them that *seek wisdom*, to ask it of “God in faith, nothing doubting,” Jam. i. 5, 6. But, however, we are to know, that God guideth us *only* to the *rule* of his word; and we must endeavour to learn

the *right* way of believing out of the word, or else we are not able so much as to trust rightly on God for guidance and direction in this great work.

To help you herein, I have given you before, in this treatise, *a description of saving faith*; and have shewed that it contains *two acts* in it: the one is, *believing the truth of the gospel*; the other is, *believing on Christ as revealed to us, and freely promised to us in the gospel, for all his salvation*. Now, your great endeavour must be, to perform *both* these acts in a *right manner*; as I shall shew concerning each of them in particular.

In the *first* place, you are highly concerned to endeavour for a *right belief of the truth of the gospel of Christ*; that so you may be well furnished, disposed and encouraged to believe on Christ, as revealed and promised in the gospel. Hereby you are to remove all discomfortable thoughts and objections of Satan, and your own conscience, and to overcome all corrupt inclinations, that hinder a cheerful embracing of Christ and his salvation. It is found, by experience, that when any fail in the second act of faith, the reason of the failing is commonly some defect in this first act. There is some false imagination or other in them, contrary to the belief of the truth of the gospel; which is a strong hold of sin and Satan, that must be pulled down, before they can receive Christ into their hearts by believing on him. If they knew the name of Christ, as he is discovered in the gospel, and judged aright of the truth and excellency of it, they certainly would not fail to put their trust in him. And we are in great danger of entertaining such false imaginations, and to account many truths of the gospel strange paradoxes, yea, foolish and pernicious, because of our ignorance or self-conceitdness guilty consciences, corrupt affections, and manifold errors, wherewith our judgments are prepossessed in matters of salvation; and because Satan laboureth to beguile us, as he did Eve, "through his subtilty, to corrupt our minds from the simplicity" of the gospel "that is in Christ," 2 Cor. xi. 3. I shall therefore give

you some particular instructions, that are of the greatest moment, to prevent such defects as we are most liable to in the first act of our faith.

1. You must believe, with a *full persuasion*, that you are a *child of wrath by nature*, as well as others; fallen from God by the sin of the first Adam; *dead in trespasses and sins*; subject to the curse of the law of God, and to the power of Satan, and to insupportable misery to all eternity; and that you cannot possibly procure your reconciliation with God, or any spiritual life and strength to do any good work, by any endeavouring to get salvation according to terms of the legal covenant; and that you cannot find any way to escape out of this sinful and miserable condition, by your own reason and understanding, without supernatural revelation, nor be freed from it, but by him that raiseth the dead. We must not be afraid, as some are, to know our own vileness and sinfulness, neither must we be willing to think ourselves better than we are; but must be heartily desirous and glad to know the worst of our own condition; yea, when we have found out the worst that we can of ourselves, we must be willing to believe, that "our hearts are deceitful, and desperately wicked," beyond all that we can know and find out, Jer. xvii. 9. This is all necessary, to work in us true humiliation, self-despair and self-loathing, that we may highly esteem, and earnestly seek the salvation of Christ, as the *one thing necessary*. It maketh us sick of sin, and sensible of our need of the great physician, and willing to be ordered according to any of his prescriptions, whatsoever we suffer, rather than to follow our own wisdom, Mat. ix. 12. It was for want of this humiliation that the Scribes and Pharisees were not so forward to enter into the kingdom of heaven, as the publicans and harlots, Mat. xxi. 31.

2. You are to believe *assuredly*, that there is no way to be saved, without receiving *all the saving benefits of Christ*; his *Spirit* as well as his *merits*, *sanctification* as well as *remission of sins*, by faith. It is the ruin of

many souls, that they trust on Christ for remission of sins, without any regard to holiness ; whereas these two benefits are inseparably joined in Christ, so that none are freed from condemnation by Christ, but those that are enabled to walk holily, that is, “ not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” Rom. viii. 1. It is also the ruin of souls, to seek only remission of sins by faith in Christ, and holiness by our endeavours, according to the terms of the law ; whereas we can never live to God in holiness, except we be dead to the law, and live only by Christ living in us by faith. That faith which receiveth not holiness, as well as remission of sins from Christ, will never sanctify us ; and therefore it will never bring us to heavenly glory, Heb. xii. 14.

3. You are to be fully persuaded of the *all-sufficiency of Christ for the salvation of yourself*, and of *all that believe on him* : and that “ his blood cleanseth from all sin,” 1 John i. 7. Though our sins be never so great and horrible, and continued in ever so long, yet he is able to deliver from the body of death, and mortify our corruptions, be they never so strong. We find in scripture, that abominable wicked persons have been saved by him ; “ idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, covetous, drunkards, extortioners,” &c. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10 ; such as have sinned against the light of nature, as the heathens, and the light of scripture, as the Jews ; such as have denied Christ, as Peter, and persecuted and blasphemed him, as Paul. Many, that have fallen into great sins, are ruined for ever, because they do not account the grace of Christ sufficient for their pardon and sanctification ; when they think they are gone, and past all hope of recovery ; that “ their sins are upon them, and they pine away in them, how shall they live ?” Ezek. xxxiii. 10. This despair works secretly in many souls, without much trouble and horror, and maketh them careless of their souls and true religion. The Devil fills some with horrid, filthy, blasphemous thoughts, on purpose, that they may think their sins too great to be forgiven : though commonly such thoughts, are the least

of the sins of those that are pestered with them, and rather the Devil's sin than theirs, because they are hurried into them sore against their wills; but, if their hearts be somewhat polluted within them, Christ testifieth, that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven, except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," Mat. xii. 31. And, as for those that are guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the reason they are never forgiven, is not because of any want of *sufficiency* in the *blood of Christ*, or in the *pardonning mercy of God*; but because they *never repent* of that sin, and *never seek* to God for mercy through Christ, but continue *obstinate* until death; for the scripture testifieth, that "it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance," Heb. vi. 5, 6. So that the merits of Christ are sufficient for all that seek to him for mercy by believing.

There are others that despair of ever getting any victory over their lusts, because they have formerly made many vows and resolutions, and have used many vigorous endeavours against them in vain. Such are to persuade themselves, that the grace of Christ is sufficient for them, when all other means have failed; as the woman that had the issue of blood, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse by any remedies that physicians could prescribe, yet persuaded herself, that, if she might but "touch the clothes of Christ, she should be whole," Mark v. 25—28. Those that despair, by reason of the greatness of their guilt and corruption, do greatly dishonour and undervalue the grace of God, his infinite mercy, and the infinite merits of Christ's blood, and power of his Spirit, and deserve to perish with Cain and Judas. Abundance of people, that give up themselves to all licentiousness, in this wicked generation, lie under secret despair; which maketh them so desperate in swearing, blaspheming, whoring, drunkenness, and all manner of wickedness. How horrid and heinous soever our sins and corruptions have been, we should learn to account them a small matter in comparison to the grace of Christ, who is God as well as man,

and offered up himself, by the eternal Spirit, as a sacrifice of infinite value, for our salvation; and can create us anew as easily as he created the world by a word speaking.

4. You are to be fully persuaded of the truth of the *general free promise, in your own particular case*, that if you *believe on Christ sincerely*, you shall have *everlasting life*, as well as any other in the world, without performing any *condition* of works to *procure an interest in Christ*, for the promise is universal; “whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed,” Rom. ix. 33. without any exception. And, if God exclude you not, you must not exclude yourselves; but rather conclude peremptorily, that how vile, wicked and unworthy soever you be, yet, if you come, you shall be accepted as well as any others in the world. You are to believe that great article in the creed, *the remission of sins*, in your *own case*, when you are principally concerned, or else it will little profit you, to believe it in the case of others. This is that which hinders many broken wounded spirits from coming to the great physician, when they are convinced of the abominable filthiness of their own hearts, and that they are dead in sin, without the least spark of true grace and holiness in them. They think that it is in vain, for such as they are, to trust on Christ for salvation; and that Christ will never save such as they are. Why so? they can be but lost creatures at worst; and *Christ came to seek and save those that are lost*. If they that are dead in sin, cannot be saved, then all must despair and perish; for none have any spiritual life, until they receive it by believing on Christ.

Some think themselves to be worse than others, and that none have such wicked hearts as they; and though others be accepted, yet they shall be rejected. But they should know, that “Christ came to save the chief of sinners,” 1 Tim. i. 15. And that the design of God is to “shew the exceeding riches of grace” in our salvation, Eph. ii. 7. which is most glorified by pardon-



ing the greatest sinners: And it is but our ignorance, to think ourselves like nobody; for all others, as well as we, are naturally "dead in trespasses and sins; their mind is enmity to God, and is not subject to his law, nor indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7; and "every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts are only evil and continually so," Gen. vi. 5; they have all the same corrupt fountain of all abominations in their hearts, though we may have exceeded many others in several actual sins. Others think that they have out-stayed their time, and therefore now they should "find no place for repentance, though they should seek it carefully with tears," Heb. xii. 17. But, "behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," 2 Cor. vi. 2. even as long as God calleth upon you by the gospel. And, although Esau was rejected, who sought rather the earthly than the spiritual blessings of the birthright, yet they shall not be rejected, that seek the enjoyment of Christ, and his salvation, as their only happiness. If you come into Christ's vineyard at the eleventh hour of the day, you shall have your penny, as well as those that came early in the morning; because "the reward is of grace, not of merit," Mat. xx. 9, 10. And here you must be sure to believe stedfastly, that Christ, and all his salvation, is bestowed as a free gift upon those that do not work to procure any right or title to him, or meetness or worthiness to receive him, but only "believe on him that justifieth the ungodly," Rom. iv. 5. If you put any condition of works, or good qualifications, between yourself and Christ, it will be a partition-wall which you can never climb over.

5. You are to believe assuredly, that it is *the will of God you should believe in Christ*, and have eternal life by him, as well as any other; and that your believing is a duty very acceptable to God; and that he will help you, as well as any other, in this work, because he calleth and commandeth you, by the gospel, to believe in Christ. This maketh us to set cheerfully upon the work of believing; as when Jesus commanded the blind

man to be called, they said unto him, "be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee," Mark x. 49. A command of Christ made Peter to walk upon the water, Mat. xiv. 29. And here we are not to meddle with God's *secret of predestination*; or the *purpose of his will*, to give the *grace of faith* to some rather than to others; but only with his *revealed will*, in his gracious invitations and commands, by which we are required to *believe on Christ*. This will of God is confirmed by his oath; "as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for, why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Christ testifieth, that "he would often have gathered the children of Jerusalem, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and they would not," Mat. xxiii. 37. And the apostle Paul testifieth, that God "will have all men to be saved," &c. 1 Tim. ii. 4. You are to reject and abandon all thoughts that are contrary to this persuason. What if few be saved? thy salvation will not make the number too great; for few will follow thee in the duty of believing. What if the wrath of God be revealed from heaven against thee in many terrible judgments; and the word, and thine own conscience condemn thee, and Christ seem to reckon thee no better than a *dog*, as he did the "woman of Canaan," Mat. xv. 16. Thou art to make a good interpretation of all these things, that the end of them is, to *drive thee to Christ*, as this was the end of the curses of the law, and all the terrible dispensations of them, Rom. x. 4. If a prophet, or an angel from heaven were sent of God, on purpose to declare, that the sentence of everlasting damnation is declared against thee; it would be thy duty to believe, that God sent him to give thee timely warning, for this very end, that thou mightest *believe*, and turn to God by faith and repentance. Jeremiah prophesied against the Jews, that God would "pluck them up, pull them down, and destroy them for their sins;" yet he himself taught them,

“if they turned from their evil ways, God would repent him of the evil,” Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 11. Jonah preached nothing but certain destruction to Nineveh, to be executed upon them within forty days, chap. iii. 4; yet the intent of that terrible message was, that those heathenish people might escape destruction by repentance.

The most absolute and peremptory denunciations of divine vengeance against us, while we are in this world, must be always understood with a secret reserve of salvation for us, upon our faith and repentance. And we are to account, that the reason why God doth so terribly denounce his judgments against us by his word, is, that we may escape them, by flying for refuge to his free mercy in Christ. Take heed of fostering any such thoughts, that God hath absolutely decreed to shew no saving mercy to you, or that you have already committed the unpardonable sin; or, that it is in vain for you to attempt the work of believing, because God will not help you in it. If such thoughts prevail in your hearts, they will do you more hurt than the most blasphemous thoughts that terrify you, or any the grossest abominations that ever you were guilty of, because they obstruct your believing on Christ for salvation. *The Spirit and the bride say, come.* Christ saith, “whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,” Rev. xxii. 17. Therefore, we are to abandon all thoughts that hinder our coming to Christ, as very sinful and pernicious, arising in us from our own corruptions, and Satan’s delusions, and utterly opposite to the mind of Christ, and teachings of his Spirit.

And what ground can we have to entertain such unbelieving thoughts? Hath God made us of his privy-council, that we should be able to know that God hath decreed us to damnation, before it be manifest by our final unbelief and impenitence? As for the unpardonable sin, it consisteth “in *renouncing* the way of salvation by Christ with the whole heart, after we have attained to the knowledge of it, and are convinced of the truth of it by the gospel.” It is a sin that the christian

Hebrews would have been guilty of, if they had revolted from christianity to the religion of the unbelieving Jews, that accounted Christ to be an impostor, and were most rancorous persecutors of him and his ways, Heb. vi. 4, 5. They that have committed that sin, continue implacable, malicious enemies to Christ and his ways, to the end, without any repentance. Therefore, if you can but find, that you desire seriously to get an interest in Christ, and to be better christians than you are; if you be troubled and grieved, that your hearts and lives are so wicked, and that you want faith, love and true obedience; yea, if your hearts be not maliciously bent to persecute the gospel, and prefer atheism, licentiousness, or any false religion before it; you have no cause to suspect yourselves to be guilty of this unpardonable sin.

6. Add to all these, a *full persuasion of the incomparable glorious excellency of Christ, and of the way of salvation by him*. You are to esteem the enjoyment of Christ as the only salvation and true happiness, and such a happiness as hath in it unsearchable riches and glory, and will make our cup to run over with exceeding abundance of peace, and joy, and glory, to all eternity. We must "account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord," &c. Phil. iii. 8. Such a *persuasion* as this, will allure and incline your wills and affections to choose and embrace Christ as the chief good, and never to rest satisfied without the enjoyment of him; and to reject every thing that stands in competition with him, or the enjoyment of him. *Christ is precious* in the esteem of all *true believers*, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Their high esteem of his incomparable preciousness and excellency, induceth them to *sell all*, that they may "buy this pearl of great price," Mat. xiii. 46. 'This maketh them to say, "Lord, evermore give us this bread, that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life," John vi. 33, 34, 68. "Because of the savour of his good

ointments, his name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love him," Song i. 3. They are "sick of love to him," because he is, in their eyes, "the chiefest among ten thousand," Song v. 8, 10.

As the glory of God, that appeared in the wonderful beauty of the temple, and in the wonder and glory of Solomon, drew worshippers to God from the utmost parts of the earth, so the unparalleled excellency of Christ, which was prefigured by the glory of Solomon and the temple, doth more powerfully draw believers in these gospel days. The Devil, who is the god of this world, knows how necessary it is for our salvation, to discern all the glory and excellency of Christ; and therefore, where the gospel is preached, he maketh it his great work to eclipse the glory of Christ in the ministry, and to blind the minds of the people, "lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine into them," 2 Cor. iv. 4. One that is convinced of the truth of the gospel, may be averse to the embracing of it until he see also the goodness of it, that Christ is altogether lovely and excellent.

I come now to "the second principal act of faith, whereby Christ himself, and his Spirit, and all his saving benefits, are actually received in the heart, which is *believing on Christ*, as revealed and freely promised to us in the gospel, for all his salvation." The Spirit of God doth habitually dispose and incline our hearts to a right performance of this act, by enabling us to perform the first act, according to the former instructions; by believing assuredly those great things of the gospel, whereby we are delivered into a "form of doctrine," Rom. vi. 17. which we are to obey from our hearts, and to follow as our pattern, in the manner of our acting faith in Christ for salvation. Therefore, I need only exhort you briefly to act your faith in Christ according to that form and pattern, in which you have been so largely instructed. You are to believe in Christ as *alone sufficient*, and *all-sufficient* for our happiness and salvation; despairing altogether for any attainment of

happiness by our own wisdom, strength and works of righteousness, or any fleshly, worldly confidences whatever. We must be as dead people to all other confidences, and account them to be *loss for Christ*, according to the example of the blessed apostle, Phil. iii. 3, 7, 8. We must not be grieved, that we have nothing to trust upon, besides Christ, for our salvation; but rather we are to rejoice, that we need nothing else, and that we have a sure foundation to rely upon, incomparably better than any other that can be imagined. And we must resolve to cast the burden of our souls wholly on Christ, and to seek salvation no other way, whatsoever becomes of us.

If the cripple lay not the whole weight of his body upon a strong staff, but part of it upon a rotten one, he is like to receive a fall. If the swimmer will not commit his body wholly to the water to bear him up, but catch at weeds, or struggle to feel out ground, he may sink to the bottom. Christ will be all our salvation, or nothing. If we seek to be saved any other way, as the Galatians did, by "circumcision, Christ will profit us nothing," Gal. v. 2.

You are also to receive Christ, *merely as a free gift*, given to the chief of sinners, resolving that you will not perform any conditions, to procure yourselves a right and title to him; but that you will come to him as a lost sinner, an ungodly creature, trusting on *him that justifieth the ungodly*: and that you will *buy him without money, and without any price* whatsoever, Rom. iv. 5. Isa. lv. 2. Look not on your faith or love, or any good qualifications in yourselves, as the grounds of your trusting in Christ, but only to the free grace and loving kindness of God in Christ: "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings," Psal. xxxvi. 7. For, if you make your faith, love, or good qualifications, to be your first and principal foundation, and you build Christ upon them, instead of building all upon Christ, you invert the order of the gospel, and *Christ will profit you nothing*.

Another thing to be observed diligently, is, that you must come to Christ for a *new holy heart and life*, and all things necessary thereunto, as well as for deliverance from the wrath of God, and the torments of hell. You must also come to him with an ardent love and affection to him, and esteem him better than ten thousand worlds, and the only excellent portion, loathing and abhorring yourself as a vile, sinful and miserable creature, and accounting all things dung in comparison of his excellency; that you may be able to say, from the bottom of your heart, "whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," Psal. lxxiii. 25.

Lastly, you must endeavour to draw near with "full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 22; trusting on Christ confidently for your *own particular* salvation, upon the account of that general promise, that "whosoever believeth on Christ shall not be ashamed," Rom. ix. 33. You must then check yourselves for all doubtings, fears, staggerings, concerning your own salvation by Christ, saying with the Psalmist, "why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?" &c. Psal. xlii. 11.

The THIRD thing contained in this Direction, is, the *avoiding all delay*, in the performance of this great work of *believing in Christ*. Until we have performed it, we continue under the power of sin and Satan, and under the wrath of God; and there is nothing between hell and us, besides the breath of our nostrils. It is dangerous for Lot to linger in Sodom, lest fire and brimstone come down from heaven upon him. The manslayer must fly with all haste to the city of refuge, "lest the avenger of blood pursue him, while his heart is hot, and slay him," Deut. xix. 5, 6. We should "make haste, and not delay, to keep God's commandments," Psal. cxix. 60; and "flee for refuge to the hope set before us," Heb. vi. 18. And God commandeth us to flee thus by faith, without which *it is impossible to please God* in other duties. The work is of such



a nature, that it may be performed as soon as you hear the gospel. As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me," Psal. xviii. 44. "As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children," Isa. lxvi. 8.

We have many examples of those that received the word by faith at the first hearing of it. Three thousand were added to the church, on the very same day wherein Peter first published the gospel in Jerusalem, Acts ii. 42. Many Jews and Gentiles were converted at the first hearing of the apostle Paul at Antioch, Acts xiii. 48. The jailer and all his household believed, and were baptized, the same night wherein Paul first preached to them, Acts xvi. 33, 34. The *gospel came* at first to the Thessalonians, "not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost," 1 Thess. i. 5, 6. If God open the hearts of his people to attend diligently, they may be instructed in the knowledge of the gospel by one brief sermon sufficiently, to begin the practice of saving faith. And, when they know their duty, God requireth immediate performance, without allowing us the least respite in the state of unbelief.

When Satan cannot prevail with people to reject the duty of believing wholly, his next attempt for the ruin of their souls, is to prevail with them at least to delay and shift off the performance of it, from time to time, by several false reasonings and imaginations which he putteth into their minds. The most ignorant and sensual are easily prevailed with to defer this duty, until they take their fill of the pleasures, profits and honours of this world, and are summoned to prepare for another world, by infirmities, age, sickness; praying and hoping, that a large time of repentance will be granted unto them before they die. But such delays shew, that they are really unwilling to repent and believe, until they are forced by necessity; and that they prefer the pleasures, profit and honours of the world above God, and Christ, and their own souls. Thus they unfit themselves more and more for this great duty, by their customary walking in sin, and by misspending the precious

time of their health and strength, which is most meet for the performance of this great work. They highly provoke God never to give them time or grace to repent thereof.

Others imagine, that after they have heard the gospel of salvation by Christ, they may lawfully defer the believing it, until they have sufficiently examined the truth of some other different doctrines, or until God be pleased to afford them some other means, to assure them fully of the truth of the gospel. Thus they that are called seekers misspend the day of grace; "ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth," 2 Tim. iii. 7. But the truth of the gospel doth so clearly evidence itself by its own light, that, if people do not wilfully shut their eyes, or blind themselves by their own pride, and love their lusts, they would easily perceive, that it is the truth of God; because the image of his grace, mercy, power, justice and holiness, appear manifestly engraven upon it. It is a sign people are proud, when they consent not to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to "the doctrine which is according to godliness," 1 Tim. vi. 3. If they were humble, and sincerely inclined to do the will of God, they "would know whether the doctrine be of God or no," John vii. 17; they would quickly be persuaded of the truth, by Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, spoken to them in the scripture. And, if they will not hear them, neither will they be "persuaded though one rose from the dead;" or whatever other miracle be wrought, to confirm the divine authority of the gospel, Luke xvi. 31.

Another sort of people there are, that delay the great work of believing, to the *ruin* of their souls, resting in an attendance upon the *outward means* of grace and salvation, instead of any endeavours to receive Christ by faith, though they be convinced of the truth of the gospel. This they call waiting upon God at the doors of his grace and salvation, in the use of means appointed by him, and sitting under the droppings of the sanc-

tuary. But, let them know, that this is not the right waiting on God required in the scripture. It is rather disobedience to God, and to the means of his appointment, who requires that we should be "doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving ourselves," Jam. i. 22; and that we should come in to the "spiritual feast," Luke xiv. 23; and not only stand at the door, or sit under the droppings of the house of God, lest Christ repute us no better than eve-droppers. That holy waiting on the Lord, commended to us in scripture, is ever accompanied with believing and hoping in the Lord, and invariably dependeth thereon: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart; wait, I say, on the Lord," Psal. xxvii. 13, 14. "It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord," Lam. iii. 26.

What is it that these deluded ones wait for, before they perform the duty of believing? Is it for more knowledge of the gospel? The way to increase thy knowledge, as well as thy other talents, is, to make use of what thou hast received already. Believe heartily on Christ for all thy salvation, according to that little knowledge of the gospel which thou hast, and thou wilt have an interest in the promise of knowledge, contained in the new covenant; "they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord," Jer. xxxi. 34. Is it for the appointed time of thy conversion, that thou waitest? Then thou waitest, as those impotent folk, who lay at the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the season when the angel will come down and move the water. Know then, that if thou enterest into Christ now by faith, thou wilt find in him *waters of life*, and the *Spirit moving them for the healing* and the *quicken- ing* of thy soul, God hath appointed, by his word, that the present time shall be the time of thy conversion: as the Holy Ghost saith, "to-day, if thou wilt hear his voice, harden not thy heart," Heb. iii. 7, 8. And thou

shalt never know at what time God hath purposed, in his secret counsel, to give faith to thee, until thou dost actually believe.

Dost thou wait for any manifestations or flowings in of God's saving love to thy soul? Then the way to obtain it, is, to *believe* that the "God of hope may fill thee with all joy and peace in believing," Rom. xv. 13. Thou hast sufficient manifestation of God's love to thy soul, by the free promises of life and salvation by Christ. Do but *trust on the name of the Lord, and stay upon thy God, when thou walkest in darkness, and seest no light* of sensible comforts any other way; otherwise thou waitest for comforts in vain, and this shalt "thou have at the Lord's hand, thou shalt lie down in sorrow," Isa. l. 10, 11.

Dost thou wait for any qualifications to prepare thee for the work of believing? If they be good and holy qualifications, thou canst not have them *before* faith, but they are rather included in the *nature* of faith, or are *fruits* of it; as hath been largely proved. If they be bad and sinful, it is strange that any should wait for them, and yet no more strange than true. Some foolishly wait to be terrified with a sense of God's wrath, and despairing thoughts; and these they call the pangs of the new birth; though, in their own nature, they are rather the pangs of spiritual death, and bring forth hatred to God, rather than holiness: and therefore we should strive to prevent them, by believing God's love in Christ, rather than to wait for them. It is true, God maketh these despairing thoughts, as well as other sins, work for good to them that are delivered from them by faith in Christ; they are moved thereby to hate sin, and to prize Christ the more, and the comforts of his gospel, and to loathe and abhor themselves: yet many are brought to Christ without them, by God's giving them the knowledge of their own sins, and of Christ's salvation together. Several examples of this were above mentioned, who receive the word with joy at the first hearing of it. And we must not desire or wait for

any evil of sin, such as these despairing thoughts are, that good may come of it : neither should we expect to be worse before we be better, when we may and ought to be better *presently*, by believing on Christ.

The **FOURTH** thing in the direction is, that we should *continue and increase in the most holy faith*. And that we may, we must not think that when we have once attained to the grace of saving faith, and thereby are begotten anew in Christ, our names are up in heaven, and therefore we may be careless : but, as long as we continue in this life, we must endeavour to “continue in the faith, grounded and settled, not moved away from the hope of the gospel,” Col. i. 23. and to “hold the beginning of our confidence, and rejoicing of hope, stedfast unto the end,” Heb. iii. 6, 14. and to “build up ourselves in our most holy faith,” Jude 20. “abounding therein with thanksgiving,” Col. ii. 7. Though we receive Christ freely by faith, yet we are but “babes in Christ,” 1 Cor. iii. 1. And we must not account, that we “have already attained,” or “are already perfect,” Phil. iii. 12, 13. but we must strive to be more rooted and built up in him, until “we come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” Eph. iv. 13.

If the new nature be really in us by regeneration, it will have an appetite to its own continuance and increase, until it come to perfection, “as the new born babe,” 1 Pet. ii. 2. And we are not only to receive Christ, and a new holy nature, by faith, but also to live and walk by it, and to “resist the devil,” and to “quench all his fiery darts by it ;” and also “grow in grace,” and to “perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord ;” for “we are kept by the mighty power of God, through faith, unto salvation,” 1 Pet. i. 5. As all our christian warfare is “the good fight of faith,” 1 Tim. vi. 12. all spiritual life and holiness continue, grow, or decay in us, according as faith continueth, groweth, or decayeth in vigour ; but, when this faith beginneth to sink by fears and doubtings, the man himself beginneth to

sink together with it, Matth. xiv. 29, 31. Faith is like the hand of Moses; "while it is held up, Israel prevails; when it is let down, Amalek prevails," Exod. xvii. 11. This continuance and growth in faith, will require our labour and industry as well at the beginning, though we are to ascribe the glory of all to the grace of God in Christ, who is *the finisher*, as well as *the author* of it, Heb. xii. 2.

The church meeteth with *great difficulties* in her *marching through* the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan, as well as in her *first deliverance* from Egyptian bondage; yea, we often meet with *greater difficulties* in going to perfection, than we did in the *beginning* of the good work: the wisdom and mercy of God so ordering it, that we should be exercised with the *sharpest* dispensations of providence, and the *fiercest* assaults of our own corruptions, and Satan's temptations, after we have *grace* given us to *stand in the evil day*. You must therefore endeavour to continue and go on in the same right manner, as I have taught you to begin this great work of believing in Christ, that your faith may be of the same nature, from the beginning to the end, though it increase in degrees: for our faith is imperfect, and joined with much unbelief in this world; and we have need to pray still, "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief," Mark xi. 24. and therefore we have need to strive for more faith, that we may receive Christ in greater perfection. If you find that your faith hath produced good works, you should thereby increase your confidence in Christ, for salvation by his mere grace. But take heed of changing the nature of your faith, from trusting on your own works, according to the popish doctrine, "that our first justification is by grace and faith only, but our second justification is only by works." Beware also of trusting on faith itself, as a work of righteousness, instead of trusting on Christ by faith. If you do not find that your believing in such a right manner as I have described, doth really produce such fruits of holiness as

you desire, you ought not to diminish, but rather to increase your confidence in Christ; knowing that the weakness of your faith hindereth its fruitfulness: and the greater your confidence is, concerning the love of God to you in Christ, the greater will be your love to his service. If you fall into any gross sin, after the work is begun in you, as David and Peter did, think not that you must *cast away your confidence*, and expect nothing but *wrath* from God and Christ, and that you must *refuse* to be *comforted* by the *grace* of Christ, at least for *some time*; for thus you would be *more weak* and *prone* to fall into *other sins*: but rather strive to believe *more confidently*, that you have “an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;” and that “he is the propitiation for our sins,” 1 John ii. 1, 2. And let not the *guilt of sin stay* at all upon your *conscience*, but *wash it away* with all speed, in the fountain of *Christ’s blood*, which is opened for us, that it may be ready for our use on all occasions; that so you may be humbled for your sins in a gospel-way, and may hate your own sinfulness, and be sorry for it with godly sorrow, out of love to God. Peter might have been ruined forever for denying Christ, as Judas was by betraying him, if Peter’s faith had not been upheld by the prayer of Christ, Luke xi. 31, 32.

If a cloud be cast over all your qualifications, so that you can see no grace at all in yourselves, yet still trust on *him that justifieth the ungodly, and came to seek and to save them that are lost*. If God seem to deal with you as an enemy, by bringing on you some horrible affliction, as he did upon Job, beware of condemning your faith, and its fruits, as if they were not acceptable to God; but rather say with holy Job, “though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain mine own ways before him,” Job xiii. 15. Strive to keep and *increase faith by faith*, that is, by acting faith frequently, by trusting on God to keep and increase it; being “confident, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” Phil. i. 6.



## DIRECTION XII.

Make diligent use of your most holy faith, for the immediate performance of the duties of the law, by walking no longer according to your natural state, or any principles or means of practice that belong to it; but only according to that new state which you receive by faith, and the principles and means of practice that properly belong thereunto; and strive to continue and increase in such a manner of practice. This is the only way to attain to an acceptable performance of those holy and righteous duties, as far as is possible in this present life.

## EXPLICATION.

HERE I am guiding you to the *manner* of practice, wherein you are to make use of faith, and of all other effectual means of holiness, before treated of, which faith layeth hold on, for the immediate performance of the law, which is the great end aimed at in this whole treatise. And therefore this deserveth to be diligently considered, as the *principal direction*, to which all the foregoing and following are subservient. As for the meaning of it, I have already shewed, that our old natural state, is that which we derived from the first Adam, by natural generation: and it is called, in the scripture, *the old man*: and, while we be in it, we are said to *be in the flesh*. And our *new state* is that which we receive from the second Adam, Jesus Christ, by being new born, in union and fellowship with him, through faith; and it is called, in scripture, *the new man*; and, when we are in it, we are said to *be in the Spirit*.

The principles and means of practice, belonging to a *natural state*, are such as persons do or may attain, and make use of, before they are in Christ by faith. Such as belong to the *new state*, are the manifold holy endowments which we partake of in Christ by faith, such as have already appeared to be the only effectual means of a holy life. We are said to walk according to either of these states, or to the principles and means that be-

long to either of them, when we are moved and guided by virtue of them, to such actings as are agreeable to them. Thus kings act, according to their state, in commanding authoritatively, and in magnificent bounty; poor men, in a way of service and obedience; and children indiscriminately, Esth. i. 7. Prov. xvii. 23. 1 Cor. xiii. 11. So the manner of practice here directed to, consists in moving and guiding ourselves, in the performance of the works of the law, by *gospel principles* and *means*. This is the rare and excellent art of godliness, in which every christian should strive to be skilful and expert.

The reason why many come off with shame and confusion, after they have a long time laboured, with much zeal and industry, for the attainment of true godliness, is, because they were never acquainted with this holy art, and never endeavoured to practise it in a right gospel way. Some worldly arts are called *mysteries*; but, above all, this spiritual art of *godliness* is, *without controversy, a great mystery*, 1 Tim. iii. 16; because the means that are to be made use of in it are deeply mysterious, as hath been shewed; and you are not a skilful artist, till you know them, and can reduce them to practice. It is a manner of practice far above the sphere of natural ability, such as would never have entered into the heart of the wisest in the world, if it had not been revealed to us in the scriptures; and, when it is there most plainly revealed, continueth a dark riddle to those that are not inwardly enlightened and taught by the Holy Spirit; such as many godly persons, guided by the Spirit, do in some measure walk in, yet do but obscurely discern; they can hardly perceive their own knowledge of it, and can hardly give any account to others of the way wherein they walk; as the disciples that walked in Christ, the way to the Father, and yet perceived not that knowledge in themselves: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" John xiv. 5. This is the reason why many poor believers are so weak in Christ, and attain so small

a degree of holiness and righteousness. Therefore, that you may the better be acquainted with the mystery of so high concernment, I shall shew, in the *first* place, that the *holy scriptures* do direct you to this *manner of practice*, as only effectual for the performance of holy duties; and *then* I shall lay before you *some necessary instructions*, that you may understand how to walk aright in it, and continue and go forward therein, until you be made perfect in Christ.

For the *FIRST* of these, the holy scriptures are very large and clear, in directing us to *this manner of practice*, and to *continuance and growth* therein. And here it is useful for us, to observe the great variety of peculiar words and phrases, whereby the Holy Ghost teacheth this mystery, which many that frequently read the scriptures, yea, that pretend to be preachers of the gospel, do little understand or regard; shewing thereby, that the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to them, and that they are not yet acquainted with the form of sound words, and are strangers to the very language of the gospel, which they profess, and pretend to preach.

I shall, therefore, present to your view several of these peculiar words and phrases, whereby this mysterious manner of practice is expressed in the holy scriptures, and commended to you as the only way for the sure attainment of all holiness in heart and life. I shall rank such of them together as agree in sense, that the multitude of them may not breed confusion in our thoughts.

1. This is the manner of practice in scripture, which is expressed by *living by faith*, Heb. ii. 4. Gal. ii. 20. Heb. x. 38; *walking by faith*, 2 Cor. v. 7; *faith working by love*, Gal. v. 7; *overcoming the world by faith*, 1 John v. 4; *quenching all the fiery darts of the wicked, by the shield of faith*, Eph. vi. 16. Some make no more of *living and walking by faith*, than merely a stirring up and encouraging ourselves to our duty by such principles as we believe. Thus the Jews might account that they *lived by faith*, because they professed and assented

unto the doctrine of Moses and the prophets, and were moved thereby to a *zeal of God*, though “they sought righteousness not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law,” Rom. x. 32. Thus Paul might think he *lived by faith*, while he was a zealous Pharisee; but afterwards he knew, that the *life of faith* consisted in *dying to the law*, and *living to God*; and that *not himself*, but *Christ lived in him*, Gal. ii. 19, 20. As it is one and the same thing, to be *justified by faith*, and by *Christ believed on*, Rom. v. 1; so, to *live, walk and work by faith*, is all one with *living, walking, working* by means of Christ, and his saving endowments; which we receive and make use of by faith, to guide and move ourselves to the practice of holiness.

2. The same thing is commended to us by the terms of *walking, rooted, and built up in Christ*, Col. ii. 6, 7; *living to God*, and *not to ourselves*, but to *have Christ living in us*, Gal. ii. 19, 20; *good conversation in Christ*, 1 Pet. iii. 16; *putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*, that we *may walk honestly as in the day*, Rom. xiii. 13, 14; *being strong in the Lord*, and in the *power of his might*, Eph. vi. 10; *doing all things in the name of Christ*, Col. iii. 17; *walking up and down in the name of the Lord*, Zech. x. 12; “going in the strength of the Lord, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only,” Ps. lxxi. 16. These phrases are frequent, and do sufficiently explain one another; and to shew, that we are to practise holiness, not only by virtue of Christ’s authority, but also of his strengthening endowments moving us, and also encouraging us thereunto.

3. It is also signified by the phrases of “being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” 2 Tim. ii. 1; “having our conversation in the world not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,” 2 Cor. i. 12; *having or holding fast grace*, that we may *serve God acceptably, labouring abundantly*, in such a manner, as the whole work is not performed by us, but *by the grace of God that is with us*, 1 Cor. xv. 13. By *grace*, therefore, we may well understand, the privileges of our new state,

given to us in Christ, whereby we ought to be influenced and guided in the performance of holy duties.

4. It is also signified, when we are to *put off the old* and *put on the new man*; yea, and to continue in so doing, though we have done it in measure already; and that we avoid our *former sinful conversation*, Eph. iv. 21, 22, 24; and to avoid sin, because we have *put off the old*, and *put on the new man*, Col. iii. 9, 10. I have already shewed, that by this *two-fold man* is not only meant merely by *sin* and *holiness*; but by the former is meant our *natural state*, with all its endowments, whereby we are furnished only to the practice of sin; and, by the latter, our *new state* in Christ, that thereby we are furnished with all means necessary for the practice of holiness.

5. We are to understand the same thing, when we are taught “not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” so that we may be “free from the law of sin,” and that “the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us,” Rom. viii. 1, 2, 3; and, “through the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body;” and to be *led by the Spirit*, because we *live by the Spirit*, and have “crucified the flesh, with the affection and lusts,” Gal. v. 24. The apostle doth shew, by these expressions, not only that we are to *practise holiness*, but also by *what means* we may do it *effectually*. By *flesh* is meant our *old nature*, derived from the first Adam; and by *Spirit* is meant the Spirit of Christ, and that *new nature* which we have by him dwelling in us. We are said to *walk* after either of these natures, when we make the properties or qualifications of either of them to be the *principles* of our practice. So, when we are taught to serve in *newness of Spirit*, and not in the *oldness of the latter*, that so we may *bring forth fruit unto God*, the meaning is, that we must endeavour to bring forth the *fruits of holiness*, not by virtue of the *law* that *killings letter*, to which the *flesh* is married, and by which the motions of sin are in us; but, by virtue of the *Spirit*, and his manifold riches, which we partake of in our *new state*, by a *mystical mar-*

*riage with Christ*, Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6; and by virtue of such principles as belong to the *new state*, declared in the gospel, whereby the *Holy Spirit is ministered to us*.

6. This is the manner of walking which the apostle Paul directeth us unto, when he teacheth us, by his own example, that the continual work of our lives should be, “to *know Christ*, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; if by any means we may attain unto the resurrection of the dead, and to *increase and press forward* in this kind of knowledge,” Phil. iii. 10, 15. Certainly he meaneth such an experimental knowledge of Christ, and his death and resurrection, as effectually maketh us conformable thereunto, in *dying unto sin*, and *living unto God*. And he would hereby guide us, to make use of Christ, and his death and resurrection, by faith, as the powerful means of holiness in heart and life; and to increase in this manner of walking, until we attain unto *perfection in Christ*.

The SECOND thing proposed, was to lay before you some *necessary instructions*, that your steps may be guided aright, to continue and go forward in this way of holiness, until you be made perfect in Christ. And, seeing we are naturally prone to mistake this way, and are utterly unable to find it out, or discern it, by our own reason and understanding, we should the more diligently attend to these instructions, taken out of the holy scriptures. And we shall *earnestly pray* that God would give us the *Spirit of wisdom and revelation*, that we may *discern the way of holiness* thereby, and *walk aright* in it; according to that gracious promise, “the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein,” Isa. xxxv. 8.

1. Let us observe, and consider diligently, in our whole conversation, that though we are partakers of a new holy state by faith in Christ, yet our *natural state* doth remain, in a measure, with all its corrupt principles and properties. As long as we live in this present world, our apprehension of Christ, and his perfections,

in this life, is only by faith: whereas by sense and reason, we may apprehend much in ourselves, contrary to Christ; and this faith is imperfect; so that true believers have cause to pray to God to *help their unbelief*, Mark ix. 24. Therefore, though we receive a perfect Christ by faith, yet the measure and degree of enjoying him is imperfect; and we hope still, so long as we are in this world, to enjoy him in a higher degree of perfection than we have done. We are yet but *weak in Christ*, 2 Cor. xiii. iv. *children* in comparison to the *perfection* we expect in another world, 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11. and we must grow still, till we come to the *perfect man*, Eph. iv. 13. and some are weaker babes than others, and have received Christ in so small a measure, that they may be accounted *carnal, rather than spiritual*, 1 Cor. iii. 1. And, because all the blessings and perfections of our new state, as justification, the gift of the Spirit, and of the holy nature, and the adoption of children, are seated and treasured up in Christ, and joined with him inseparably; we can receive them no farther than we cordially receive Christ himself, by a true faith, which we only do in an imperfect measure and degree in this life. The apostle Paul proposeth himself as a pattern for all those that are *perfect in the truth of grace* to imitate: and yet he professeth, that he was not yet made so perfect, in the degree and measure of saving endowments, but that he did still “press forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” labouring still “to apprehend and win Christ more perfectly, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is of God by faith; and to gain more experimental knowledge of Christ, and of the fellowship of his sufferings, and power of his resurrection, being made conformable thereunto,” Phil. iii. 8, 10, 14. Believers are justified already; yet *wait for the hope of righteousness, by faith*, that is, for the full enjoyment of the righteousness of Christ, Gal. v. 5. They have received but *the first fruits of the Spirit*, and must



wait for the full enjoyment of it. The Spirit witnesseth now to them, that *they are the children of God*; and yet they groan within themselves, waiting for a more full enjoyment of adoption, Rom. viii. 23.

Now, seeing the degree and measure of our reception and enjoyment of Christ, with all the blessings of our new state in him, in this life, is imperfect, it followeth clearly, our contrary natural state, with its properties, remaineth still in us, in some degree, and is not perfectly abolished; so that all believers in this world do, more or less, partake of these two contrary states. Believers have, indeed, *put off the old man*, and *put on the new*, where *Christ is all and in all*, Col. iii. 10, 11; yet they are to put the *old man off*, and the *new man on*, more and more, because the *old man* remaineth still in a measure. They are said to be, *not in the flesh*, but *in the Spirit*, because their being in the Spirit is their best and lasting state; as denominations are usually taken from the better part: but yet the *flesh* is in them, and they find work enough to *mortify the deeds of it*, Rom. viii. 9, 13.

Therefore, several things, which are contrary to each other, are frequently attributed to believers in the scripture, with respect to these two contrary states, wherein one place seems to contradict another; and yet both are true in divers respects.\* Thus holy Paul saith truly of himself, *I live, yet not I*, Gal. ii. 20; because he did *live to God*, by *Christ living in him*: and yet, in another respect, according to his *mortal* state, he did *not live to God*. Again, he professeth that he was *carnal, sold under sin*; and yet, on the contrary, that he *allowed not sin*, but *hated it*. He sheweth how both these were true, concerning himself, in divers respects. He saith, “In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;” and *I delight to do the will of God*, according to the *inward man*. “With my mind, I myself serve the law of God; but, with the flesh, the

\* The reader, if he chooses, may see more instances, by consulting Mr. R. Erskine, vol. x. p. 160, 207.

law of sin," Rom. vii. 14, 15, 18, 22, 25. John saith, "He that saith he hath no sin, deceiveth himself, and is a liar," 1 John, i. 8; and also that it is true, that "whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed [*i. e.* Christ, the new spiritual nature] remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," 1 John iii. 9. It is true, that we are weak and can do nothing; and yet strong, and *able to do all things*, 2 Cor. xii. 10, 11. Phil. iv. 13. It is true, that believers are "dead, because of sin; but alive, because of righteousness," Rom. viii. 10; and that, when they die a natural death, they *shall never die*, John xi. 25, 26. They are sons that have the *inheritance* by birth-right, and yet, in some respects, may differ nothing from *servants*: and so they may be *under the law*, in a sense, and yet *under grace*, and *heirs*, according to the free and gracious promise at the same time, Gal. iv. 1, 2. They are *redeemed from the curse of the law*, and have *forgiveness of sins*, and a promise, that God *will never be wroth with them, nor rebuke them any more*, Gal. iii. 13. Eph. i. 7. Isa. liv. 9; and yet, on the contrary, *the curse, written in the law*, is some times *poured out upon them*, Dan. ix. 11; and they have need still to pray, that God would "deliver them from guiltiness, and forgive their debts," Ps. li. 14. Mat. vi. 12; and they may expect, that God "will punish them for all their iniquities," Amos iii. 2.

These contrary things asserted, concerning believers in scripture, do sufficiently manifest, that they partake of two *contrary states* in this life. And this is a plain, easy and ready way to reconcile these *seeming* contradictions, whatever other ways may be used to reconcile some of them. And what reason is there to question, that the *old state* remaineth in believers, in *some degree*, seeing all sound protestants acknowledge, that the sinful depravation and pollution of our natures, commonly called *original sin*, which is one principal part of this *old state*, doth remain in all, as long as they live in the world? Now, though some penal evils may be said to

remain in us, yet we cannot suppose, that this original pollution is continued in us as considered *in Christ*; but as considered *in our old state*, derived from the first Adam. Therefore, the *first sin* of Adam is *imputed*, in some respect, even to those that are *justified by faith*; and they remain, in some measure, as aforesaid, under the punishment and curse denounced, Gen. ii. 17. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." And, on this account, the same *original guilt* and *pollution* is propagated to the *children of believing parents*, as well as others, by *natural generation*. And, if such a great and fundamental part of our natural state continue in believers, as subjection to the guilt of the first sin and original corruption, which is one great part of the punishment and death threatened, and by which we are prone and inclined to all actual sins: why should we not judge, that other parts of the same state do likewise continue in them, as the real guilt of their own actual sins, and subjection to the wrath of God, and the curses and punishments denounced against them in the law? and why should we not judge, that all the miseries of this life, and death itself, are inflicted upon believers, at least in some respect, as punishments of sin?

It may be objected, that this doctrine of a two-fold state of believers in this life, doth much derogate from the perfection of our justification by Christ, and also from the fulness of all the grace and spiritual blessings of Christ, and from the merits of his death, and from the power of his Spirit; and that it greatly diminisheth the consolation of believers in Christ. But it is easily vindicated from this objection, if we understand it rightly; for, notwithstanding this two-fold state, it still holdeth true, that believers, while they are on earth, have all perfections of spiritual blessings, justification, adoption, the gift of the Spirit, holiness, eternal life, and glory with Christ, Eph. i. 3. In the person of Christ, who is now in heaven, the old man is perfectly crucified; they are dead to sin, and to the law in its curse, and they are quickened together with him, and raised

up with him, and made to sit in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6. And believers do, in their own persons, receive and enjoy, by faith, all these perfect spiritual blessings of Christ, as far as they receive and enjoy Christ himself dwelling in them, and no farther.

Thus far they are in a *new state*, free from the guilt, pollution and punishment of sin, and from the wrath of God, all miseries, and death itself, while they are in this world; yea, all the guilt, pollution and punishments of sin, and all evils whatever, which they are subject to, according to their natural state, do them no harm, according to this new state, but work for their good: and are no evils, but rather advantages to them, tending to the destruction of the flesh, and the perfection of the new man in Christ. Yet it holdeth true also, that our reception and enjoyment of Christ himself, and all his perfections, is but an imperfect measure and degree, until faith be turned into heavenly vision and fruition of Christ; and, therefore, our old sinful state, with the evils thereof, is not perfectly abolished during this life. The kingdom of heaven, or the grace of Christ within us, is like leaven in meal, which doth not unite itself perfectly to the meal in an instant, but by degrees, until *the whole be leavened*, Mat. xiii. 33; or, like the *morning light*, that expelleth darkness by degrees, “shining more and more unto the perfect day,” Prov. iv. 18.

This cannot be justly accounted any derogation from the merits of Christ’s death, or from the power of his Spirit, seeing Christ never intended to bring to pass, by his death, or by the power of his Spirit, that we should enjoy his spiritual blessings any farther than we are in him, and enjoy him by faith: or that we should be made holy or happy according to the *flesh*, by a reformation of our natural state; as hath been shewed. Neither does this diminish the consolation of believers in Christ; for thereby they may know, that they have the perfection of grace and happiness in Christ, and that

they enjoy it in this world, as far as they enjoy Christ himself by faith; and that they shall enjoy it in a perfect measure, and be fully freed from their sinful and miserable state, when that frame of nature, which they received from the *first Adam*, is dissolved by death.

This instruction is very useful to frame our souls aright, for the practising holiness, only by those gospel principles and means that belong to our *new state*, which we are partakers of by faith in Christ. And thus it is easily vindicated from another great objection, wherein the papists and quakers do much triumph. They appeal to men's consciences to answer this question; "which doctrine is most likely to bring people to the practice of true godliness; theirs, which teacheth, *that perfect holiness may be attained in this life*; or ours, which teacheth, *that it is impossible for us to keep the law perfectly, and to purge ourselves from all sin, as long as we live in this world, though we use our best endeavours.*" They think that common reason will make the verdict pass for them against the doctrine, as that which discourageth all endeavours to perfection, and hardeneth the hearts of people, to allow themselves in sin, because they cannot avoid it. But, on the contrary, the doctrine of the perfectionists hardens people, to allow themselves in sin, and to call *evil good*; as the papists account, that "the concupiscence of the flesh against the spirit, is no sin, but rather good matter for the exercise of their virtues, because the most perfect in this life are not without it." It also discourageth those that labour to get holiness in the right way, by faith in Christ, and maketh them to think that they labour in vain, because they find themselves still sinful, and far from perfection, when they have done their best to attain it. It hindereth our diligence in seeking holiness by those principles and means whereby only it can be found; for, who will be diligent and watchful to avoid walking according to his own carnal principles, if he think, that his own carnal state, with its principles, is quite abolished, and is out of him, so that at present

he is in no danger of walking according to them? What-ever good works the doctrine of the perfectionists may serve to promote, I am sure it hindereth a great part of that work which Christ would have us to be employed in, as long as we live in this world. We must know, that our *old state*, with its evil principles, continueth still in a measure, or else we should not be fit for the great duties of confessing our sins, loathing ourselves for them, praying earnestly for the pardon of them, a just sorrowing for them with a godly sorrow, accepting the punishment of our sins, and giving God the glory of his justice, and offering to him “the sacrifice of a broken and contrite spirit, *being poor in spirit*, working out our own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Some have doubted, how it can consist with our justification by Christ, that we should be still liable to be punished for our sins, and obliged to pray for the pardon of them; because they have not well considered the *two-fold state* of believers in this life. And, except we know this, and keep it in mind, we shall never be fit to practise continually the great duties that tend to the *putting off the old man*, and *putting on the new*, and *mortifying the deeds of the body by the Spirit*; praying continually, that God would *renew a right spirit in us*, and *sanctify us throughout*; pressing forward unto perfection, *desiring the sincere milk of the word*, and the enjoyment of other ordinances. Christ hath appointed, that his church on earth should be employed in such works; and perfectionists either do, or fain would account them needless for them, and that they have no longer need of Christ himself, to be their spiritual physician and “advocate with the Father,” and “propitiation for their sins;” therefore, they are not fit to be members of the church on earth, and are never likely to be members of the church in heaven, except they can make a ladder, and climb up thither before their time.

2. Despair of purging the *flesh*, or *natural man*, of its sinful lusts and inclinations, and of practising holiness, by *your willing and resolving to do the best that*

lieth in your *own* power, and trusting on the grace of God and Christ, to help you in such resolutions and endeavours ; rather resolve to trust on Christ, to “ work in you to will and to do, *by* his own power, according to his own good pleasure.” They that are convinced of their sin and misery, do commonly first think to *tame the flesh*, and to subdue and root out its lusts, and to make their corrupt nature to be better natured, and inclined to holiness, by their struggling and wrestling with it : and, if they can but bring their hearts to a full purpose and resolution to do the best that lieth in them, they hope, that by such a resolution, they shall be able to atchieve great enterprizes, in the conquest of their lusts, and the performance of the most difficult duties. It is the great work of some eminent divines, in their preaching and writings, to stir up people to this resolution, wherein they place the *chiefest turning point from sin to godliness*. And they think, that this is not contrary to the life of faith, because they trust on the grace of God, through Christ, to help them in all such resolutions and endeavours.

Thus they endeavour to reform their old state, and to be made perfect in the flesh, instead of putting it off, and walking according to the new state in Christ. They trust on low carnal things for holiness, and also upon the acts of their own will, their purposes, their resolutions, and their own endeavours, instead of Jesus Christ ; and then they trust on Christ to help them in this carnal way : whereas true faith would teach them, that they are nothing, and that they but labour in vain. They may as well wash the blackmoor white, as purge the flesh, or natural man, from its evil lusts, and make it pure and holy. It is desperately wicked, past all cure. It will unavoidably lust against the Spirit of God, even in the best saints on earth, Gal. vi. 17. Its “ mind is enmity to the law of God ;” *and* neither *is*, nor “ can be subject to it,” Rom. viii. 7. They that would cure it, and make it holy, by their own resolutions and endeavours, do act quite contrary to the design of Christ’s



death; for he died, not that the *flesh*, or the *old natural man*, might be made *holy*; but that it might be *crucified*, and *destroyed* out of us, Rom. vi. 6; and that we might *live to God*, not to *ourselves*, or by any natural power of our own resolutions and endeavours, but by *Christ living in us*, and by his "Spirit bringing forth the fruits of righteousness" in us, Gal. ii. 20. and v. 24, 25. Therefore, we must be content to live the natural man, vile and wicked, as we found it, until it be utterly abolished by death; though we must not allow its wickedness, but rather groan to be delivered from the body of this death, thanking God that there is a *deliverance through Jesus Christ our Lord*.

Our way to mortify sinful affections and lusts, must be, not by *purging* them out of the flesh, but by *putting off* the flesh itself, and getting above into Christ by faith, and walking in that *new nature* that is by him. Thus "the way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath," Prov. xv. 24. Our willing, resolving and endeavouring, must be, to do the best, not that lieth in ourselves, or in our own power, but that Christ and the power of his Spirit shall be pleased to work in us: for "in us, (that is, in our flesh) there dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18. We have great ground to trust in God and Christ for help in such resolutions and endeavours after holiness, as in things that are agreeable to the design of Christ in our redemption, and to the way of acting and living by faith. It is likely, that Peter sincerely resolved to die with Christ, rather than to deny him, and to do all that he could, by his own power, for that end; but Christ made him quickly to see the weakness and vanity of such resolutions. And we see, by experience, what many resolutions made in sickness, and other dangers, mostly come to. It is not enough for us to trust on Christ to help us to act and endeavour so far only as creatures; for so the worst of men are helped: he is the JEHOVAH, "in whom we live, move, and have our being," Acts xvii. 28. And it is likely the Pharisee would trust on

God, to help him in duty as he would thank God for the performance of duty, Luke xviii. 11. And this is all the faith that many make use of in order to a holy practice. But we must trust in Christ to enable us above the strength of our own natural power, by virtue of the new nature which we have in Christ, and by his Spirit dwelling and working in us ; or else our best endeavours will be altogether sinful, and mere hypocrisy, notwithstanding all the help for which we trust upon him. We must also take heed of depending for holiness upon any resolution to walk in Christ, or any written covenants, or any holiness, that we have already received ; for, we must know, that the virtue of these things continues no longer than we continue walking in Christ, and Christ in us. They must be kept up by the continual presence of Christ in us ; as light is maintained by the presence of the sun, and cannot subsist without it.

3. You must not seek to procure forgiveness of sins, the favour of God, a new holy nature, life, and happiness, by any *works of the moral law*, or by any *rites and ceremonies* whatever ; but rather you must work as those that have all these things already according to your new state in Christ ; as such who are only to receive them more and more by faith, as they are ready prepared and treasured up for you, and freely given to you, in your spiritual head, the *Lord Jesus Christ*. If we walk as these that are yet wholly to seek for the procurements of such enjoyments as these, it is a manifest sign, that at present, we judge ourselves to be without them, and likewise without Christ himself, in whose fulness they are also all contained ; and, therefore, we walk according to our old natural state, as those that are yet in the flesh, and that would get salvation in it, and by our carnal works and observances, instead of living altogether on Christ by faith.

This practice is according to the tenor of the covenant of works ; as I have before shewed. And we have no ground to trust on Christ and his Spirit, to

work holiness in us this way ; for *we are dead*, to the legal covenant, *by the body of Christ*, Rom. vii. 4 ; and “ if we be led by the Spirit, we are not under the law,” Gal. v. 18. When the Galatians were seduced, by false teachers, to seek the procurement of justification and life by circumcision, and other works of the Mo-  
saical law, the apostle Paul rebuked them for seeking to be made *perfect in the flesh*, directly contrary to their *good beginning in the Spirit*, for rendering *Christ of none-effect to them*, and for *falling from grace*, Gal. iii. 3. and v. 4. And when some of the Colóssians sought perfection, in like manner, by observation of *circumcision, holy meats, holy times*, and other *rudiments of the world*, the same apostle blameth them for *not holding the head, Jesus Christ*, and as such were not *dead and risen with Christ*, but *living merely in the world*, Col. ii. 19, 20. and iii. 1. He clearly sheweth, that those who seek any saving enjoyment in such a way, do walk according to their old *natural state* ; and that the true manner of living by faith in Christ, is, to walk as those that have all fulness and perfection of spiritual blessings in Christ, by faith, and need not seek for them any other way to procure them for themselves.

In this sense, it is a true saying, that believers should not act *for*, but *from* life. They must act as those that are not procuring life by their works, but as such who have already received and derived life from Christ, and act from the power and virtue received from him. And hereby it appears, that the papists, and all others that think to justify, purify, sanctify, and save themselves by any of their own works, rites, or ceremonies whatever, do walk in a carnal way, as those that are without any present interest in Christ, and shall never attain unto holiness or happiness, until they learn a better way of religion.

4. Think not, that you can effectually incline your heart to the immediate practice of holiness, by any such *practical principles*, as do only serve to bind, press, and urge you to the performance of holy duties ; but

rather let such principles stir you up to go to Christ first by faith, that you may be effectually inclined to the immediate practice of holiness in him, by gospel principles, that strengthen and enable you, as well as oblige you thereunto. There are some practical principles, that do only bind, press, and urge us to holy duties, by shewing the reasonableness, equity, and necessity of our obedience, without shewing at all, how we that are by nature *dead in sin, under the wrath of God*, may have any strength and ability for the performance of them: as for instance, the *authority* of God the lawgiver; our absolute dependance on him as our Creator, Preserver, Governor, in whose hand is our life, breath, and all our happiness here and forever; his *all-seeing eye*, that searcheth our heart, discerneth our very thoughts, and secret purposes; his *exact justice*, in rendering to all according to their works; his *almighty and eternal power*, to reward those that obey him, and to punish transgressors forever; the *unspeakable joy of heaven*, and *terrible damnation of hell*. Such principles as these do bind our consciences *very strictly*, and work very strongly upon the prevalent affections of hope and fear, to press and urge our hearts to the performance of holy duties, if we believe them assuredly, and work them earnestly upon our hearts, by frequent, serious, and lively meditation. And therefore some account them the most forcible and effectual means to form any virtue in the soul, and to bring it to immediate performance of any duty, though never so difficult; and that the life of faith consisteth principally in our *living to God* in holiness, by a constant belief and meditation on them. And they account those things that serve to mind them of such principles, very effectual for holiness; as looking on the picture of death, or on a death's head, keeping a coffin by them ready made, walking about among the graves, &c. But this is not that manner of living to God whereof the apostle speaketh, when he saith, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the

faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. If a man make use of these obliging principles, to stir him up to go to Christ for strength to act holily, he walketh like one that hath received Christ as his only life by faith; otherwise he walketh like other natural men. For, the natural man may be brought to act by these principles, partly by natural light, and more fully by scripture light, without any true knowledge of the way of salvation by Christ, as if Christ had never come into the world. And he may be strictly bound by them, and vehemently urged and pressed to holy duties; and yet all this while, is left to his own natural strength, or rather weakness, being not assured, by any of these principles, that God would give him strength to help him in the performance of these duties; and can do nothing aright, until he get new life and strength by Christ, by a more precious saving faith. There would be no need of a new life and strength by Christ, if these principles were sufficient to bring us to a holy conversation. Therefore, this manner of practice is no better than *walking after the flesh*, according to our corrupt state, and seeking to be *made perfect in the flesh*. No question but Paul was very diligent in it, while he was a blinded Pharisee. Yea, the heathen philosophers might attain to it, in some measure, by the light of common reason. The devils have such principles, as they do believe assuredly; yet they are never the better for them. It is a part of the natural *wisdom, whereby the world knew not God*, not that *wisdom of God in a mystery*, discovered in the gospel, which is the only sanctifying *wisdom*, and *power of God unto salvation*. What can you produce but corruption, by pressing with motives to holiness, one that hath "no soundness in him, from the sole of the foot, even to the head, *only* wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores." He that is made truly sensible of his own vileness and deadness by nature, will despair of ever bringing himself to holiness by such principles that afford him no life and strength, but

only lay an obligation upon him to urge and press him to duty. What are mere obligations to one that is dead in sin? While the soul is without spiritual life, sin is the more moved and enraged by pressing and urging from the soul the obligations of the law and its command. "The motions of sin are by the law; and sin, taking occasion by the commandment, worketh in us all manner of concupiscence," Rom. vii. 5, 8.

And yet these obliging principles are very good and excellent in this right gospel use of them; as the apostle saith of the *law*, that it is *good, if it be used lawfully*, 1 Tim. i. 8. The humbled sinner knoweth well his obligations; but it is life and strength that he wanteth, and despaireth of walking according to such obligations, until he get his life and strength by faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, these obliging principles do move him to go in the first place, to Christ, that so he may be enabled to answer their end, by the strengthening and enlivening principles of God's grace in Christ. Some there are that make use of gospel principles, only to oblige and urge to duty, without affording any life and strength for the performance; as "they that think that Christ died and rose again to establish a new covenant of works for our salvation, and to give us a pattern of good works by his own obedience, rather than to purchase life, obedience, and good works for us." Such as these do not understand and receive the principles of the gospel *rightly*; but they pervert and abuse them, contrary to their true nature and design; and thereby they render them as ineffectual for their sanctification, as any other natural or legal principles.

5. Stir and strengthen yourself, to perform the duties of holiness, by a *firm persuasion* of your enjoyment of Jesus Christ, and all spiritual and everlasting benefits through him. Set not yourself upon the performance of the law, with any prevailing thoughts or apprehensions, that you are yet without an *interest in Christ*, and the *love of God* through him; and the *curse of the law*, the *power of sin and Satan*, having no better por-

tion than this present world ; no better strength, than that which is in the purposes and resolutions of your own free will. While such thoughts prevail, and influence your acting, it is evident, that you walk according to the principles and practices of your *old natural state* ; and you will be moved thereby, to yield to the dominion of sin and Satan, to withdraw yourselves from God and godliness, as Adam was moved, from the sight of his own nakedness, *to hide himself from God*, Gen. iii. 10. Therefore, your way to a holy practice, is first to conquer and expel such unbelieving thoughts, by trusting confidently on Christ, and persuading yourselves by faith, that his righteousness, Spirit, glory, and all his spiritual benefits are yours ; and that *he dwelleth in you, and you in him*. In the might of this confidence, you shall go forth to the performance of the law ; and you will be strong against sin and Satan, and *able to do all things through Christ that strengthens you*. This confident persuasion is of great necessity to the right framing and disposing our hearts to walk according to our *new state* in Christ. The life of faith principally consisteth in it. And herein it eminently appeareth, that *faith* is a *hand*, not only to *receive* Christ, but also to *work* by him ; and that it cannot be effectual for our sanctification, except it contain in it some *assurance* of our interest in Christ ; as hath been shewed.

Thus we act as those that are above the sphere of nature, advanced to union and fellowship with Christ. The apostle maintained in his heart a *persuasion* that Christ had *loved him*, and *given himself for him* ; and hereby he was enabled to *live to God* in holiness, through Christ *living in him* by faith. He teacheth us also, that we must maintain the *like persuasion*, if we would *walk holily in Christ*. We must know that our *old man* is *crucified with him* ; and we must reckon ourselves “ dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” Rom. vi. 6, 11. This is the means whereby we may be “ filled with the Spirit,



strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might ;” which God would not require of us, if he had not appointed the means, Eph. vi. 20. Christ himself walked in a constant persuasion of his excellent state ; he *set the Lord always before him*, and was persuaded, that because “ God was at his right hand, he should not be moved,” Psal. xvi. 8.

How should it be rationally expected, that a man should act according to his *new state*, without *assurance* that he is in it ? It is a rule in common prudence in worldly conditions, that every man must know, and well consider his own state, lest he should act proudly above it, or sordidly below it. And it is a hard thing to bring some to a right estimate of their own worldly condition. If the same rule were observed in spiritual things, doubtless the knowledge and persuasion of the glory and excellency of our *new state* in Christ, would *more elevate* the hearts of believers above all sordid slavery to their lusts, and *enlarge* them to “ run cheerfully in the way of God’s commandments.” If christians knew their own strength better, they would enterprize greater things for the glory of God. But this knowledge is difficultly attained : it is only by faith and spiritual illumination. The best know but in part ; and hence it is, that the *conversation* of believers falleth so much below their holy and heavenly calling.

6. Consider what *endowments, privileges, or properties* of your *new state* are most meet and forcible to incline and strengthen your heart to love God above all, and to renounce all sin, and to give up yourself to universal obedience to his commands ; and strive to walk in the persuasion of them, that you may attain to the practice of these great duties. I may well join these together, because, to “ love the Lord with all our heart, might, and soul, is the first and great commandment,” which influenceth us to all obedience, with a hatred and detestation of all sin, as it is *contrary* and *hateful* to God. The same effectual means that produceth the one, will also produce the other ; and holiness

*chiefly* consisteth in these. So the *chief* blessings of our holy state are most meet and forcible to enable us for the immediate performance of them, and so are to be made use of to this end by *faith*. Particularly, you must believe stedfastly, that all your sins are blotted out, and that you are reconciled to God, and have access into his favour by the blood of Christ; and that he is your God and Father, and altogether love to you, and your all-sufficient everlasting portion and happiness through Christ.

Such apprehensions as these, do present God as a very lovely object to our hearts; and do thereby allure and win our affections, that cannot be forced by commands or threatenings, but must be sweetly won and drawn by allurements. We must not harbour any suspicions, that God would prove a terrible everlasting enemy to us, if we would love him: for, "there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment: *he that* feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 18, 19. David loved the Lord, because he was persuaded, that he was his "strength, rock, fortress; his God, and the horn of his salvation," Psal. xviii. 1, 2. *Love*, that causeth obedience to the law, must proceed from a *good conscience*, purged from sin; and this good conscience must proceed from *faith unfeigned*, whereby we apprehend the *remission of our sins*, our reconciliation with God by the *merits of the blood of Christ*, 1 Tim. i. 5. Heb. ix. 14.

For the same end, that your hearts may be rightly fitted and framed for the performance of these principal duties, the holy scripture directeth you to walk in the persuasion of other principal endowments of your new state; as that you have fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ, 1 John i. 3; that you are the *temple of the living God*, 2 Cor. vi. 16; that you "live by the Spirit," Gal. v. 25; that you are "called to holiness, and created in Christ Jesus unto good works;" that God would "sanctify you wholly,

and make you perfect in holiness at last," 1 Thess. v. 23. Eph. ii. 10; that your "old man is crucified with Christ;" and through him "you are dead unto sin, and alive unto God: *and*, being made free from sin, you are become the servants of righteousness, and have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," Rom. vi. 6, 22; "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 3, 4.

Such *persuasions* as these, when they are deeply rooted, and constantly maintained in our hearts, do strongly arm, and encourage us to practice universal obedience, in opposition to every sinful lust; because we look upon it, not only as our duty, but our great privilege "to do all things through Christ strengthening us:" and God doth certainly work in us, *both to will and to do*, by these principles, because they properly belong unto the gospel, or New Testament, which is the "ministration of the Spirit, *and* the power of God unto salvation," 2 Cor. iii. 6, 8. Rom. i. 16.

7. For the performance of other *duties* of the law, you are to consider, not only these endowments, privileges, and properties of your new state, which are meet and forcible to enable you to the love of God, and universal obedience; but also, those that have a peculiar *force* and *aptitude*, suitable to the special nature of such duties; and you must endeavour to *assure* yourselves of them by faith, that you may be encouraged and strengthened to perform the duties. I shall give you some instances of this manner of practice in several duties, whereby you may the better understand how to guide yourselves in the rest.

And, as to the duties of the *first table*, if you would draw near to God, in the duty of his worship, with a *true heart*, you must do it in *full assurance of faith*, concerning your enjoyment of Christ and his salvation. And would you perform the great duty of "trusting on the Lord, with all your heart, casting your care upon

him," and committing the disposal of yourself to him in all your concerns? Persuade yourself through Christ, that God, according to his promise, *will never fail you, nor forsake you*; that he taketh a *fatherly care of you*; that he will *withhold no good thing from you*; and will make *all things to work for your good*. And thus you will be strong and courageous in the practice of this duty; whereas, if you live in the mere suspense concerning your interest in the privileges, you will be subject to *carnal fears, and carking cares*, in despite of your heart; and you will be prone to trust on the arm of flesh, though your conscience tell you plainly, that, in so doing, you incur the heinous guilt of idolatry. Would you be strengthened to submit to the hand of God, with a cheerful patience, in bearing any affliction, and death itself? the way to fortify yourselves, is, to believe assuredly, that "*your afflictions, which are but for a moment, do work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*;" that Christ is "*your gain in death and life*;" and his *grace is sufficient for you*, and his *strength made perfect in your weakness*; and that he will *not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able*; and will, *at last, make you more than conquerors over all evil*. Until you attain unto such persuasions as these, you will be prone to fret and murmur under the burden of affliction, and to use indirect means to deliver yourselves, notwithstanding the clearest convictions to the contrary. Would you limit yourselves to the observation of God's own institutions in his worship? believe that you are *complete in Christ*, and have all perfection of spiritual blessings in him; and that God will build you up in Christ by the ordinances of his own appointment. This will make you account his ordinances sufficient, and men's traditions and inventions needless in the worship of God; whereas, if you do not apprehend all fulness in Christ, you will be like the Papists, fond to catch at every straw, and to multiply superstitious observations without end, for the supply of your spiritual wants. Would you confess your

sins to God, pray to him, and praise him heartily for his benefits? would you praise him for afflictions, as well as prosperity? believe assuredly, that *God is faithful and just to forgive your sin* through Christ; that you are made *a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices* of prayer and praises, that are *acceptable to God through Christ*; and that God heareth your prayers, and will fulfil them, so far as they are good for you; and that *all God's ways are mercy and truth towards you*, whether he prosper or afflict you in this life.

If you be altogether in doubt, or otherwise persuaded, concerning these privileges, all your confessions, prayers, and praises, will be but heartless lip-labour, slavish or pharisaical works. In like manner, you will be enabled to *hear and receive* the word as the *word of God*, and to meditate on it with delight; and you will be willing to know the strictness and spirituality of the commands of God, and to try and examine your ways impartially by them, *if you believe assuredly*, that the word is the *power of God unto salvation*; and that Christ is our great physician, *willing to heal you, be the case never so bad*; and where your *sin abounds*, his *grace towards you doth much more abound*: whereas, without these comfortable apprehensions, all the works of hearing, meditation, self-examination, will be but uncouth, heartless works; and they will be performed negligently, and by halves, or hypocritically, and out of slavish fear, with much reluctancy, without any good will, or readiness of mind. So also, for the right receiving of the *sacraments* you will find yourself much strengthened by believing, that you may have communion with God and Christ in them, and that you have a great High-Priest to *bear the iniquity of your holy things*, and to make you forever *accepted before the Lord*.

In the same way you are to apply yourselves to all duties towards *your neighbour*, required in the *second table* of the law, by acting in a *persuasion* of such privileges of your *new state*, as have a peculiar force to encourage and strengthen you, for the performance of

them. That you may "love your neighbour as yourself, and do to him in all things as you would he should do to you, without partiality and self-seeking; that you may give him his due honour, and abstain from injuring him in his life, chastity, worldly estate, good name, or from coveting any thing that is his, according to the several commands in the second table of the decalogue:" you must walk in a persuasion, not only that these things are just and equitable towards your fellow-creatures, and that you are strictly bound to the performance of them; but that they are the will of your "heavenly Father, who hath begotten you, according to his own image, in righteousness and true holiness; and hath given you his Spirit, that you may be like minded to him in all things; and that they are the mind of Christ, who dwelleth in you, and you in him;" that God and Christ are kind, tender-hearted, long-suffering, full of goodness to men, whether good or bad, friends or enemies, poor or rich; and that Christ came into the world, not to destroy, but to save; and that you are of the same spirit; that the injuries done to you by your neighbours, can do you no harm; and you need not seek any good for yourselves by injuring them, because you have all desirable happiness in Christ; and all things, though intended by your enemies for your *hurt*, certainly work for your *good* through Christ.

Such apprehensions as these, wrought in us by the spirit of faith, do certainly beget in us a right frame of spirit, thoroughly furnished for every good work towards our neighbour. Likewise, your heart will be "purified to unfeigned love of the brethren in Christ," and you will walk toward them with all "lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love," if you maintain a stedfast belief and persuasion of those manifold bonds of love, whereby you are inseparably joined with them through Christ; as particularly, that there is "one body, and one Spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one

God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Finally, you will be able to abstain from all fleshly and worldly lusts, that war against the soul, and hinder all godliness, by an *assured persuasion*, not merely that gluttony, drunkenness, lechery, are filthy swinish abominations; and that the pleasures, profits, and honours of the world, are vain empty things; but that you are "crucified to the flesh and the world, and quickened, raised, and sit in heavenly places together with Christ;" and that you have pleasures, profits, honours, in Christ, to which the best things in the world are not worthy to be compared; and that you are "members of Christ, the temple of his Spirit, citizens of heaven, children of the day, not of the night, nor of darkness," so that it is below your state and dignity to practice deeds of darkness, and mind *fleshly worldly things*.

Thus I have given instances enough, to stir you up to acquaint yourselves with the manifold endowments, privileges, properties of your new state in Christ, as they are discovered in the *gospel of your salvation*, whereby the new nature is fitted for holy operations; as the common nature of man is furnished with the endowments necessary for those functions and operations to which it is designed; and also to stir you up, to make use of them by faith, as they serve to strengthen you either for universal obedience, or for particular duties. And, by this manner of walking, your hearts will be comforted, and established in every good word and work: and you will grow in holiness, until you attain unto *perfection in Jesus Christ*.

8. If you endeavour to grow in grace, and in all holiness, *trust assuredly*, that God will enable you, by this manner of walking, to do every thing that is necessary for his glory, and your own everlasting salvation; and that he will graciously accept of that obedience through Christ, which you are enabled to perform, according to the measure of your faith, and pardon your failings, though you offend in many things, and fall



short of many others, as to degrees of holiness, and high acts of obedience. And therefore, attempt not the performance of duty in any other way, though you cannot yet attain to do so much as you would do in this way. This is a necessary instruction to establish us in this life of faith, that the sense of our manifold failings and defects may not move us either to despair, or to return to the use of carnal principles and means, for help against our corruptions, as accounting this way of living and acting by faith to be insufficient for our sanctification and salvation. The apostle Paul exhorts the Galatians to *walk in the Spirit*, though *the flesh lusts against the Spirit*, so that they cannot do the things they would, Gal. v. 16, 17. We are to know, that though the law requireth of us the utmost perfection of holiness, yet the gospel maketh an allowance for our weakness, and Christ is so meek and lowly in heart, that he accepteth of that which our weak faith can attain to by his grace, and doth not exact nor expect any more of us for his glory and our salvation, until we grow stronger in grace. God shewed his indulgence to his people under the Old Testament, that Moses, the lawgiver, “suffered them, because of the hardness of their hearts, to put away their wives, though from the beginning it was not so,” Matth. xix. 8; and also, in tolerating the customary practice of *polygamy*. Though Christ will *not tolerate* the continuance of such practices in his church, since his Spirit is more plentifully poured forth under the gospel; yet he is as *forward* as ever to bear with the failings of his weak saints, that desire to obey him sincerely.

We have another instance of God’s indulgence, more full to our present purpose, in his *commanding*, that the *fearful* and *faint-hearted* should not be forced to enter into battle against their enemies, but suffered to *return home to their houses*; though fighting in battle against their enemies, without fear and faint-heartedness, was a duty that God did very much exercise his people in at that time, Deut. xx. 3, 8. So under the gospel,

though it be an eminent part of Christ's service, to endure the greatest fight of afflictions, and death itself courageously, for his name's sake; yet if any be so weak in faith, that they have not sufficient courage to venture into the battle, no doubt but Christ alloweth them to make use of an honest means whereby they escape the hands of persecutors, with safety to their holy profession. He will accept them in this weaker kind of service, and will approve of them better than if they should hazard a denial of his name, by venturing themselves upon the trial of martyrdom, when they might have escaped it. Peter came off with sin and shame, by *venturing beyond the measure of his faith*, into the hands of his persecutors, when he went after Christ to the High Priest's hall; whereas, he should rather have made use of that indulgent dismissal that Christ gave to him, and the rest of his disciples: "let these go their way," John xviii. 8. Christ dealeth with his people as a good careful shepherd, that will not over-drive his sheep. "He shall gather the lambs, with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isa. xl. 11. He would not have his disciples urged *rigorously* upon the duty of fasting, when their spirits were unfit for it; because he knew that imposing duties, above their strength, is like "putting a piece of new cloth in an old garment, and new wine into old bottles;" which spoileth all at last, Mat. ix. 14—17.

That precept of Solomon, "be not righteous over-much," Eccles. vii. 16, is very useful and necessary, if rightly understood. We are to beware of being *too rigorous* in exacting righteousness of ourselves and others, beyond the measure of faith and grace. *Over-doing* commonly proveth *undoing*. Children that venture on their feet beyond their strength, get many a fall; and so have babes in Christ, when they venture *unnecessarily* upon such duties as are beyond the strength of their faith. We should be content at present, to do the best that we can, according to the mea-

sure of the gift of Christ, though we know that others are enabled to do much better; and we are not to *despise the day of small things*, but to praise God that he worketh in us *any thing* that is well-pleasing in his sight, hoping that he will *sanctify us throughout*, and bring us at last to *perfection* of holiness through Jesus Christ our Lord. And we should carefully observe, in all things, that good lesson of the apostle, “not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith,” Rom. xii. 3.

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### DIRECTION XIII.

Endeavour diligently to make the right use of all means appointed in the word of God; for the obtaining and practising holiness, only in this way of believing in Christ, and walking in him, according to your new state by faith.

### EXPLICATION.

THIS might have been added to the instructions in the explication of the former direction, because its use is the same, to guide us in the *mysterious* manner of practising holiness in Christ, by the life of faith; but the *weight* and *comprehensiveness* of it, maketh it worthy to be treated of by itself, as a distinct direction. Two things are observable in it.

FIRST, that though all holiness be effectually attained by the life of faith in Christ, yet the use of any means appointed in the word for attaining and promoting holiness, is not hereby made void, but rather established. This is needful to be observed against the pride and ignorance of some carnal gospellers, who, being puffed up with a conceit of their feigned faith, imagine themselves to be in such a state of perfection, that they are above all ordinances, except singing hallelujahs; and also against the Papists, that run into the

contrary extreme, by heaping together a multitude of means of holiness, which God never commanded, neither ever came they into his heart, and that slander "the protestant doctrine of faith and free grace, as if it tended to destroy all diligent use of the means of holiness and salvation, and to breed up a company of lazy Solifidians." We do indeed assert and profess, that "a true and lively faith in Christ is alone sufficient and effectual, through the grace of God, to receive Christ and all his fulness, so far as it is necessary in this life, for our justification, sanctification, and eternal salvation:" but yet we also assert and profess, that "several means are appointed of God for the begetting, maintaining, and increasing this faith, and the acting and exercising it, in order to the attainment of its end; and these means are to be used diligently," which are mentioned in the sequel.

True believers find, by experience, that their faith needeth no such helps, and they that think themselves above any need of them, do *reject the counsel of God*, against themselves, like to those proud Pharisees and lawyers, that thought it a thing beneath them, and *refused to be baptized of John*, Luke vii. 30. Yet we account no means necessary or lawful to be used, for the attainment of holiness, besides those that are appointed by God in his word. We know that holiness is a part of our salvation; and therefore they that think men may, or can invent any means effectual for the attainment of it, do ascribe their salvation *partly* to men, and rob God of his glory, in being our only saviour; and they do thereby plainly shew, that though they "draw nigh unto God with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, yet their hearts are far from him." And in vain do they worship him, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," Mat. xv. 7, 8, 9.

The SECOND thing observable, and principally designed in this direction, is, *the right manner of using all the means of holiness*, for the obtaining and practising it no other way, besides that of believing in Christ,

and walking in him, according to our new state by faith; which hath been demonstrated to be the only way whereby we may effectually attain to this end. We must use them as *helps* to the life of faith, in its beginning, continuance, and growth; and as *instruments* subservient to faith, the *principal* instrument, in all its acts and exercises, whereby the soul *receiveth* Christ, and walketh in all *holiness* by him. We must beware, lest we use them rather in *opposition* than in subordination to the way of sanctification and salvation, by free grace in Christ, through faith; and lest, by our abuse of them, they be made rather *hindrances* than *helps* to our faith. We must not *idolize* any of the means, and put them into the place of Christ, as the Papists do, *by trusting in them*; as if they were effectual to *confer grace* to the soul, by the work that is done in the *use of them*. Neither may we use them as works of righteousness, to be performed as *conditions* for procuring the favour of God, and Christ's salvation. Neither must they be accounted so *absolutely* necessary to *salvation*, as if a true faith were void, and of none *effect*, when we are *debarred* from the enjoyment of several of them. The holy scriptures, with all the means of grace appointed therein, are "able to make us wise unto salvation," no other way than "by faith in Jesus Christ," 2 Tim. iii. 15. And therefore, our wise endeavour must be, not to use them in any *opposition* to the grace of God in Christ. For God's ordinances are like the *cherubims of glory*, made with their *faces looking towards the mercy seat*. They are made, to guide us to Christ for salvation by faith alone. If any turn them to another use, it is a great violation of divine institutions; as if any sacrilegious person had presumed to turn the faces of the cherubims from the mercy seat some other way.

This *right* use of the means of grace is a point wherein many are ignorant, that use them with great zeal and diligence; and thereby they do not only lose their labour, and the benefit of the means, but also they wrest and pervert them to their own destruction.

The Jews, under the law of Moses, enjoyed *many more* ordinances of divine worship than we do under the gospel; but their table became their *snare*, and they fell miserably from God and Christ, because the "veil of ignorance was upon their hearts," that they could not look to the end of those ordinances, even to the Lord Jesus Christ, and "they sought not salvation by faith, but by the ordinances, as works of righteousness;" and by other works of the law: for "they stumbled at the stumbling-stone," Rom. ix. 31, 32, and x. 4, 5. 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14. That you may not stumble and fall by the same pernicious error, I shall shew particularly how several of the principal means of holiness, appointed in the word of God, are to be made use of in that right manner expressed in the direction.

1. We must endeavour diligently to know the *word of God*, contained in the holy scripture, and to improve it to this end, that we may be "made wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus," 2 Tim. iii. 15. *Other* means of salvation are necessary to the more abundant *well being* of our faith, and of our new state in Christ; but *this* is absolutely necessary to the *very being* thereof: because *faith cometh by hearing* of the word of God, and receiveth Christ as manifested in the word; as I have before proved. Rahab the Canaanite was justified by faith, before she had any visible communion with the church in any of God's ordinances: yet not without the word of God, even the same word, for substance, which was written in the scriptures, and was then extant in the books of Moses; though that word was not brought to her by any book of holy scripture, nor by the preaching of any holy minister, but by the report of the heathens, Josh. ii. 9, 11. But here our great work must be, to get such a knowledge of the word, as is necessary and sufficient to guide us in receiving Christ, and walking in him by faith. You must not be of their mind that think the knowledge of the ten commandments to be sufficient to salvation, or that would have mysteries to remain hid from the un-

derstanding of the vulgar, and nothing to be preached to them but what they can readily assent to, and receive by the light that is in all men : of which mind, it may be, some ministers are, who unwittingly agree with the quakers in a fundamental of their heresy. But you must endeavour chiefly, to know the mystery of "the Father and the Son," as it is discovered in the gospel, "wherein are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 2, 3, "which to know is life eternal," John xvii. 3; and the ignorance of it is *death eternal*, 2 Cor. iv. 3. You must know, that "Christ is the end of the law," Rom. x. 4; and therefore you must endeavour to know the commands of the law; not that you may be enabled, by that knowledge to practise them immediately, and so to procure salvation by your works; but rather by your knowledge of them, you may be made sensible of your inability to perform them, and of the enmity that is in your heart against them, and the wrath that you are under for breaking them, and the impossibility of being saved by your own works; that so you may fly to Christ for refuge, and trust only to the free grace of God for justification, and strength to fulfil the law acceptably, through Christ, in your conversation. And, for this end, you must endeavour to learn the utmost strictness of the commands, the exact perfection and spiritual purity which they require, that you may be more convinced of sin, and stirred up to seek unto Christ for remission of sin, for purity of heart, and spiritual obedience, and be brought nearer to the enjoyment of him; as Christ testifieth that the scribe, who understood the greatness of that command, of *loving the Lord with all the heart and soul*, was not far from *the kingdom of God*, Mat. xii. 34.

The most effectual knowledge for your salvation, is, to understand these two points; the desperate sinfulness and misery of your own natural condition, and the alone sufficiency of the grace of God in Christ for your salvation; that you may be abased as to the flesh, and exalted in Christ alone. And, for the better under-



standing these two main points, you should learn how “the first Adam was the figure of the second,” Rom. v. 14 ; how *sin* and *death* came upon *all* the *natural seed* of the *first Adam*, by his disobedience in *eating the forbidden fruit*, and how *righteousness* and *everlasting life* came upon *all* the *spiritual seed* of the *second Adam*, JESUS CHRIST, by “his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross.” You should learn the *true difference* between the two covenants, the *old* and the *new*, or the *law* and the *gospel* ; that the former shutteth us up under the guilt and power of sin, and the wrath of God and his curse, by its rigorous terms, “do all the commandments and live ; *and* cursed are you, if you do them not, and fail in the least point : the letter openeth the gates of righteousness and life to all believers, (i. e. the new covenant) by its gracious terms, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and live,” i. e. all your sins shall be forgiven, and holiness and glory shall be given to you freely, by his merit and Spirit.

Furthermore ; you should learn the *gospel principles* that you are to walk by, for the attainment of holiness in Christ. And here I shall mind you particularly, that you would be a good proficient in christian learning, if you get a good understanding of the sixth and seventh chapters of the apostle Paul to the Romans ; where the powerful principles of sanctification are purposely treated of, and differenced from those weak and ineffectual principles, which we are most naturally prone to walk by. I need not particularly commend any other points of religion to your learning ; for, if you get the knowledge of these principal points, which I have mentioned, and improve it to a right end, which is to live and walk by faith in Christ, your own renewed mind will covet the knowledge of all other things that appertain to life and godliness ; and, “if in any other thing you be otherwise minded,” than is according to saving truth, “God shall reveal even this unto you,” Phil. iii. 15. Yet, let me caution you, lest, instead of gaining Christ by your knowledge, you rather lose him, by putting your know-

ledge in the place of Christ, and trusting on it for your salvation. One cause of the Jews perishing was, that "they rested in a form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law," Rom. ii. 20. And doubtless, all that many Christians will gain by their knowledge in the end, will only be, to be beaten with more stripes; because they place their religion and salvation chiefly in the knowledge of their Lord's will, and in their ability to talk and dispute of it, "without preparing themselves to do according thereunto," Luke xii. 47. Much less are you to place your religion and hope of salvation, in a daily task of reading chapters, or repeating sermons, without understanding more than the papists do their latin mass lessons, and canonical hours; as sad experience sheweth, that many seemingly devout and frequent hearers of the word, do notwithstanding remain in lamentable and wonderful ignorance of the saving truth. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, "that in hearing they shall hear, and not understand; and, in seeing, they shall see, and not perceive," Mat. xiii. 14, 15.

2. Another means to be used diligently for the promoting the life of faith, is, *examination of our state and ways, according to the word of God*; whether we be, at present, in a state of sin and wrath, or of grace and salvation; that, if we be in a state of sin, we may know our sickness, and come to the great physician, *while it is called to-day*; and, if we be in a state of grace, *we may know that we are of the truth, and assure our hearts before God, with the greater confidence*, by the testimony of a good conscience, 1 John iii. 19, 21: that so our hearts may be more strongly comforted by faith, and established in every good work; and that, if our ways be evil, we may *turn* from them to the Lord our God, through Christ; "without whom none cometh to the Father," Lam. iii. 40. John xiv. 6. But your great care, in this work of self-examination, must be, to perform it in such a manner, that it may not hinder and destroy the life of faith, as it doth in many, instead of promoting it. Therefore, beware, lest you trust upon your

self-examination rather than upon Christ ; as some do, that think they have made their peace with God, merely because they have examined themselves upon their sick-bed, or before receiving the Lord's supper, though they have found themselves stark naught, and do not depend on Christ, to make them better, but on their own deceitful purposes and resolutions.

Think not that you must begin this work with doubting, whether God will extend mercy to you, and save you ; and that you must leave this a question wholly under debate, until you have found out how to resolve it by self-examination. This is a common and very pernicious error in the the very foundation of this work, which is hereby laid in the *great sin of unbelief* ; which, as soon as it prevaiileth, doth, by its great influence, dash and obscure all inward gracious qualifications, of peace, hope, joy, love to God and his people, before they be at all tried, whether they can give any good evidence of their salvation. And it makes people willing to think their own qualifications better than they are, lest they should fall into an utter despair of their salvation ; and thus it wholly marreth the good work of self-examination, and maketh it destructive to our souls ; for "to them that are defiled and unbelieving, there is nothing pure," Titus i. 15. You should rather begin the work with *much assurance* of faith, that though you may at present find your heart never so wicked and reprobate, (as many of God's choicest servants have found) yet the door of mercy is open for you, and that God will *certainly save you forever, if you put your trust in his grace through Christ.*

I have formerly shewed, that this *confident persuasion* is of the nature of saving faith, and that we have sufficient ground for it in the free promise of the gospel, when we *walk in darkness* and can see *no light* shining forth in our gracious qualifications. If we begin the work with this confidence, it will make us impartial, and not afraid to find out the worst of ourselves, and willing to judge, that our "hearts are deceitful above

all things, and desperately wicked" beyond what we can find out, Jer. xvii. 9. And, if we have any *holy qualifications*, this confidence will preserve them in their vigour and brightness, that they may be able to give clear evidence, that we are in a state of grace. Mark well the difference between these two questions—*Whether God will graciously accept and save me, though a vile sinner, through Christ?* as was before said: and *Whether I am already brought into a state of salvation?* The former of these, I say, is to be resolved affirmatively, by a confident faith in Christ, the latter is only to be inquired into by *self-examination*.

Misspend not your time, as many do, in poring upon your hearts, to find whether you be good enough to trust on Christ for your salvation, or to find whether you have any faith, before you dare to be so bold as to act faith in Christ. But know, that though you cannot find that you have any faith or holiness, yet if you will "now believe on him that justifieth the ungodly, it shall be accounted to you for righteousness," Rom. iv. 5. And if you love Christ, and your own soul, misspend not your time in examining, whether you have committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, except it be with a full purpose to assure yourself, more and more, that you are not guilty thereof; for any doubtfulness in this point, will but harden you in unbelief. Remember well, that the question to be resolved, is, *whether you be at present in a state of grace?* and to resolve it, you must be willing to know the best of yourself, as well as the worst: and you must not think, that humility bindeth you to overlook your good qualifications, and to take notice only of your corruptions. But your great work must be, to find whether there be not some drop of saving grace in the ocean of your corruption? And it will consist well with humility, to take notice of, and own any spark of true holiness that is in you: because the praise and glory of it belongeth not to you, but to God, Phil. i. 11. And you must try inherent grace by the touch-stone, not by the measure;

by its nature, not its degree ; not denying any lustings of the Spirit in you, because of the strong lustings of the flesh against the Spirit ; or denying that you are *spiritual*, in some degree, and *babes in Christ*, because you find yourselves carnal in a more prevailing degree, and the *old man bigger than the new*, Gal. v. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 1.

Especially, you are to examine and prove, whether you be in the faith ? For, if you make sure of this, you make sure of all the things that pertain to life and godliness : and, if you doubt this, you will certainly doubt of the truth of any other qualifications, and will suspect them to be merely carnal and counterfeit ; because it is a known truth, that *to the unbelieving there is nothing pure* ; and all that have not truly received Christ by faith, are at present in an unregenerate state, though they seem never so pure and godly, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Tit. i. 15. And let not the issue of this trial depend at all upon your knowledge of the time when, or of the sermon, conference, or place of scripture, by which you were first converted to the faith ; though that is good to know too, if it may be. And some who have formerly lived in gross ignorance, or in a manifest opposition to true faith and holiness, may know such circumstances of their conversion, and may reflect upon them comfortably, as the apostle Paul did, who was turned of a sudden, from his persecuting rage, to be a disciple and an apostle of Jesus Christ ; yet others, sincere believers, may be wholly ignorant of them, as John the Baptist, who “was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb,” Luke i. 15 ; and they that have been trained up religiously, and *know the holy scripture from their childhood*, as Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 15 ; yea, many that are first turned from gross ignorance and profaneness, to some external reformation, and then, in process of time, brought nearer to the kingdom of heaven, by insensible degrees, before they be really new-begotten by the *spirit of faith*. There are also some that deceive their souls, by imagining they know,

at what time, and at what texts of scripture, they were converted, and can make large discourses of the workings of God upon their hearts, and are prone to talk unseasonably, with vain glorifying, of their own experiences ; when, at last, all their experiences are not sufficient to evidence, that they ever attained to the least measure of true saving faith.

Therefore, that we may not unjustly condemn or justify our faith, by proceeding on insufficient evidences in its trial, our best way is, to examine it by the *inseparable properties* of a true saving faith, by putting to ourselves such questions as these ; Are we made thoroughly sensible of our sinfulness, and of the deadness and misery of our natural state, so as to despair absolutely for ever attaining to any righteousness, holiness, or true happiness, while we continue in it ? Are the eyes of our understanding enlightened, to see the excellency of Christ, and the alone sufficiency and all-sufficiency of his grace for our salvation ? Do we prefer the enjoyment of him alone above all things, and desire it with our whole heart, as our only happiness, whatsoever we may suffer for his sake ? Do we desire, with our whole heart, to be delivered from the power and practice of sin, as well as from the wrath of God, and pains of hell ? Do our hearts come to Christ, and lay hold on him for salvation, by trusting on him only, and endeavouring to trust on him confidently, notwithstanding all fears and doubts that assault us ? If you find in yourself a faith that hath these properties, though as small as a grain of mustard-seed, and opposed with much unbelief and manifold corruptions in your soul, you may conclude, that you are in a state of salvation at present, and that your remaining work is, to continue and grow in it more and more, and to walk worthy of it.

You should also examine the *fruits* of your faith, and try whether you can *shew your faith by your works*, as you are taught, James ii. 18 ; that you may be sure not to be deceived in your judgment concerning it. And though it be true, as I have noted, that doubts concern-

ing your faith will breed doubtings concerning the sincerity of other qualifications that are fruits thereof; yet possibly you may get such clear evidences of your sincerity, as may overcome and expel all your doubts. And here you are not only to inquire, whether your inclinations, purposes, affections, and actions be materially good and holy; but also by what principles they are bred and influenced? whether it be by slavish fears of hell, and mercenary hopes of getting heaven by your works, which are legal and carnal principles that can never breed true holiness: or, by gospel principles, as by love to God, because God hath loved you first, and to Christ, because he hath died; and by the hope of eternal life, as the free gift of God through Christ, and dependance on God, to sanctify you by his Spirit, according to his promises? Remember, that the New Testament is *the ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 6; and the Spirit will sanctify us, not by legal, but by gospel principles.

Take notice further, that you need not trouble yourself, to find out a multitude of marks and signs of true grace, if you can find a few good ones. Particularly, you may know, that "you are passed from death to life, if you love the brethren," 1 John iii. 14; i. e. If you love all whom you can in charity judge to be true believers, and that because you apprehend they are believers, and for *the truth's sake, that dwelleth in them*. As Solomon discerned the true mother of the child, by her affection towards her child; so the mother-grace of faith may be discerned by the love it breeds in us towards all true believers. To conclude this point, happy are you, if you can find so much evidence of the fruits of your faith, as may enable you to express your sincerity in these moderate terms, "Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things, willing to live honestly," Heb. xiii. 18.

3. *Meditation on the word of God* is of very great use and advantage for the attainment and practice of holiness through faith in Christ. It is a duty whereby the



soul doth feed and ruminate upon the word as its spiritual food, and digesteth it, and turneth it into nourishment, whereby we are strengthened for every good work. "Our souls are satisfied therewith, as with marrow and fatness; when we remember God upon our beds, and meditate on him in the night watches," Psal. lxiii. 5, 6. The new nature may well be called the mind, Rom. vii. 25; because it liveth and acteth, by minding and meditating on *spiritual things*. Therefore, it is a duty to be practised, not only at some limited times, but *all the day*, Psal. cxix. 97; yea, *day and night*, Psal. i. 2; even when engaged in all our ordinary employments at home and abroad. A habitual knowledge of the word will not profit us, without an active minding it by frequent meditation. Some think, that much preaching of the word is not needful, where people are already brought to the knowledge of those things that are *necessary to salvation*. But they that are regenerated by the word, find, by experience, that their spiritual life is maintained and increased by often minding the same word: and therefore, "as new-born babes, that desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby," 1 Pet. ii. 2; and would, by the preachers, be often put in the remembrance of the same things, that they may feed upon them by meditation, though they *knew them* already, and are *established in the present truth*, 2 Pet. i. 12.

But here our greatest skill and chiefest concernment lies, in practising this duty in such a *manner*, as that it may be subservient, and not at all opposite to the *life of faith*. We must not rely upon the performance of a daily task of meditation, as a work of righteousness for the procurement of the favour of God, instead of relying on the righteousness of Christ; as, indeed, we are prone to do, to catch at any straw, rather than to trust only on the free grace of God in Christ for our salvation. And the end of our meditation must not be mere speculation and knowledge of the truth, but rather the vigorous pressing it on our consciences, stirring our

hearts to the practice of it. And, in stirring up ourselves to a holy practice, we must warily observe, how far the several parts of the truths of God are powerful and effectual for the attainment of this end, that we may make use of them accordingly. We must not imagine, as too many do, yea, and some great masters in the art of meditation, that we can bring our hearts effectually to the love of God and holiness, and can work strange alterations, and frame in our hearts any holy qualifications or virtue, merely by working in ourselves strong apprehensions of God's eternal power and Godhead, his sovereign authority, omniscience, perfect holiness, exact justice, the equity of his law, and reasonableness of our obedience to it; the unspeakable happiness prepared for the godly, and misery for the wicked to all eternity.

*Meditations* on such things as these, is indeed very useful to press upon our consciences the strictness of our obligation to holy duties, and to move us to go by faith to Christ, for life and strength to perform them. But that we may receive this life and strength, whereby we are enabled for immediate performance, we must meditate *believing* on Christ's saving benefits, as they are discovered in the gospel; which is the only doctrine which is the power of God to our salvation, and whereby the quickening Spirit "is ministered to us, and that is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among all them that are sanctified," Rom. i. 16. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Acts xx. 32. You must take special care to *act faith* in your meditation: mix the word of God's grace with it, or else it will not profit you, Heb. iv. 2. And if you set the *loving kindness of God* frequently before your eyes, by meditating on it believingly, you will be strengthened to *walk in the truth*, Psal. xxvi. 3; and, by "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, you will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. This kind of meditation is sweet, and delightful to those that are guided to it by the *Spirit of faith*; and it needs not the help of such artificial methods as the

vulgar cannot easily learn. You may let your thoughts run in at liberty, without confining them to any rules of method. You will find your souls much enlivened by it, and enriched with the grace of God, which cannot be effected by any other kind of meditation, though it be never so methodical, and curiously framed according to the rules of art.

4. The sacrament of *baptism* must needs be of great use to promote the life of faith, if it be made use of according to its nature and institution ; because it is a *seal of the righteousness of faith*, as *circumcision* was formerly, Rom. iv. 11. But then we must take heed of making it a *seal of the contrary righteousness of works* ; as the carnal Jews did, that sought to be *justified* by the *law of Moses* ; and, as many christians do, that “ transform the new covenant into a covenant of works, requiring sincere obedience to all the laws of Christ, as the condition of our justification ;” into which *new devised* covenant they think themselves to be *entered by their baptism*. I may say of baptism, thus perverted and abused, as the apostle saith of circumcision, “ baptism verily profiteth, if thou keep the law ; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy *baptism* is made no baptism,” Rom. ii. 25. If thou be baptised, so long as thou continuest in the abuse of that holy ordinance, “ Christ shall profit you nothing ; Christ is become of none effect to you ; ye are fallen from free grace,” Gal. v. 2, 4.

Beware also of making an idol of baptism, and putting it in the *place of Christ*, as the papists do, who hold, that it conferreth grace by the very work that is performed in the administration of it ; and as many ignorant people do, that trust rather on their baptism, than on Christ ; like the Pharisees, who placed their confidence on circumcision and other external privileges, Phil. iii. 4, 5. We are to know, that God “ is not well pleased with many that are baptised,” 1 Cor. x. 2. and the time will come, when he will punish the *baptised* with the *unbaptised*, as well as the *circumcised* with the *uncircumcised*, Jer. ix. 25.

Beware also of advancing *baptism* to an *equal partnership* with *faith* in your salvation; as some do, who account all baptism null and void, besides that which is administred to persons grown up to years of discretion; and they that refuse to be *rebaptised* at these years, are to be accounted aliens from the true church, from Christ, and his salvation, notwithstanding all their faith in Christ. If the baptism of *infants* were null and void; yet the want of true baptism would be no damning matter to those that are otherwise persuaded. *Circumcision* was as *necessary as baptism* in its time; and yet the Israelites *omitted* it for the space of forty years in the wilderness, without fearing, that any would fall *short of salvation for want of it*, Josh. v. 6, 7. Many precious saints, in the primitive times of persecution, having gone to heaven through a baptism of suffering for the name of Christ, before they had opportunity to be baptised with water. And in those ancient times, when the custom of deferring baptism too much prevailed, we are not to think that none were in a state of salvation by faith in Christ, that deferred the ordinance or neglected it.

Take notice further, that it is not sufficient to avoid the pernicious errors of those that pervert baptism, contrary to its institution; but you must be also diligent in improving it to the ends for which it was instituted. And here let me desire you to put the question seriously to your souls, what good use do you make of your baptism? How often or seldom do you think upon it? The vulgar sort of christians, yea, it may be feared, many sincere converts do so little think upon their own baptism, and study to make a due improvement of it, that it is of no more profit to their souls than if they never had been baptised; yea, their sin is the more aggravated, by rendering such an ordinance of none-effect to their souls, through their own gross neglect. Though baptism be administered to us but once in our lives; yet we ought frequently to reflect upon it, and upon all occasions to put the question to ourselves, 'unto what were we baptised?' Acts xix. 3. What does this ordinance seal? what did it engage us to? And accordingly we must stir up and

strengthen ourselves by our baptism to lay hold on the grace which it seals to us, and to fulfil its engagements.

We should often remember, that we are made Christ's disciples by baptism, and engaged to hear him, rather than Moses, and to believe on him for our salvation; as John baptised with the *baptism of repentance*, saying to the people, that "they should believe on him that should come after him," i. e. on Christ Jesus. We should remember that our baptism sealed our "putting on of Christ, and our being the children of God by faith in Christ," and our being *no longer under the former school-master, the law*, Gal. iii. 25, 26, 27; and that it sealed to us the "putting off the body of sin," and our "burial and resurrection with Christ by faith," and the "forgiving of our trespasses," Col. ii. 12, 13. our being made members of *one body, Christ*; and to *drink into one Spirit*, Cor. xii. 12, 13. We may find by such things as these, which are more fully discovered in the gospel, that it is the proper nature and tendency of baptism, to guide us to faith in Christ alone for remission of sins, holiness, and all salvation, by union and fellowship with him; and that a diligent improvement of this ordinance, must needs be of great advantage to the life of faith.

5. The Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is as a spiritual feast to nourish our faith, and to strengthen us to walk in all holiness by Christ living and working in us, if it be used according to the pattern which Christ gave us in its first institution, recorded by the three evangelists, Mat. xxvii. 26—28. Mark xiv. 22—24. Luke xxii. 19, 20; and was extraordinarily revealed from heaven by Christ himself to the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 23—25.; that we might be the more obliged and stirred up to the exact observation of it. Its end is not only that we may remember Christ's death in the *history*, but in the *mystery* of it; as that *his body was broken for us, that his blood is the blood of the new testament*, or covenant, "shed for us, and for many, for the remission of sins;" that so we may receive and enjoy all the promises of the new covenant which are recorded, Heb. viii. 10—12.

Its end is, to remind us, that Christ's body and blood are bread and drink, even all-sufficient food to nourish our souls to everlasting life ; and that we ought to take, and eat, and drink him by faith, and to assure us, that, when we, "truly believe on him, he is as really and closely united to us by his spirit, as the food which we eat and drink is united to our bodies." Christ himself (John vi.) doth more fully explain this mystery.

Furthermore—this sacrament doth not only put us in mind of the spiritual blessings wherewith we are blessed in Christ, and our enjoyment of them by faith, but also it is a mean and instrument, whereby God doth really exhibit and give forth Christ and his salvation to true believers, to receive and feed upon Christ by present actings of faith, while they partake of the outward elements. When Christ saith, "Eat, drink; this is my body, this is my blood," no less can be meant, than that Christ doth as truly give his body and blood to true believers in that ordinance, as the bread and cup; and they do as truly receive it by faith. As if a prince invest a subject in some honourable office, by delivering to him a staff, a sword, or a signet; and say to him, "take this staff, sword, or signet; this is such an office or preferment;" or if a father should deliver a deed for conveyance of land to his son, and say, "take it as thy own; this is such a farm or manor;" how can such expressions import any thing less, in common sense and reason, than a present, gift, and conveyance of the offices, preferments, and lands, by and with those outward signs? Therefore the apostle Paul asserteth, that the *bread* in the Lord's supper, "is the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup is the communion of his blood," 1 Cor. x. 16; which sheweth, that Christ's body and blood are *really communicated* to us, and we do *really partake* of them, as well as of the bread and cup.

The chief excellency and advantage of this ordinance is, that it is not only a *figure* and *resemblance* of our living upon a crucified Saviour, but also a precious instrument, whereby Christ, the bread and drink of life, is really conveyed to us, and received by us, through faith.

This makes it to be a love-token, worthy of that ardent affection towards us, which filled Christ's heart at the time when he instituted it, when he was on the point of finishing his greatest work of love, by "laying down his life for us," 1 Cor. xi. 23. And this is diligently to be observed, that we may make a right improvement of this ordinance, and receive the saving benefits of it.

One reason why many do little esteem, and seldom or never partake of this ordinance, and do find little benefit of it, is, because they falsely imagine, that God in it only holds forth naked signs and resemblances of Christ and his salvation, which they account to be held forth so plainly in scripture, that they need not the help of such a sign; whereas, if they understood, that God doth *really give Christ himself to their faith*, by and with those signs and resemblances, they would prize it as the most delicious feast, and be desirous to partake of it on all opportunities, Acts ii. 42. and xx. 7.

Another reason why many partake seldom or never of this ordinance, and know little of the benefit of it, is because they think themselves brought by it into great danger of *eating and drinking their own damnation*: according to those terrifying words of the apostle, "for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body," 1 Cor. xi. 29. Therefore they account it the safest way, wholly to abstain from such a dangerous ordinance; or that once a year is enough to run so great a hazard. And if they be brought to it sometimes by constraint of conscience, their slavish fears bereave them of all comfortable fruit of it. So that instead of striving to receive Christ and his salvation therein, they account themselves to have succeeded well, if they come off without the sentence of damnation; as the Jewish Rabbies wrote, that the High Priest's life was so eminently hazarded by his entering once a year into the *holy of holies*, that he stayed there as little time as he could, lest the people should think him to be struck dead by the hand of God; and when he was come forth alive, he usually made a feast of thanksgiving for joy of so great a deliverance.



But there is no reason why we should be so much terrified by those words of the apostle ; for they were darted against such a gross profanation of the Lord's supper among the Corinthians, as we may easily avoid by observing the institution of it, which the apostle proposeth to them as a sufficient remedy against the gross abuse, *in not discerning* or differencing the *Lord's body from other bodily food*, and partaking of it as their own supper with such disorder, that one was *hungry*, and another *drunken*. Besides, that terrifying word *damnation*, may be rendered more mildly *judgment*, as it is in the margin; yea, the apostle himself, ver. 32, doth interpret it of a merciful, *temporal judgment*, whereby we are "chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

We are indeed prone to sin, in receiving this ordinance unworthily, and so we are also to pollute, more or less, all other holy things that we meddle with. So that the consideration of our danger might fill us with slavish fear in the use of all other means of grace, as well as of this, were it not, that we have a great High Priest, to bear the iniquity of our *holy things*, Exod. xxviii. 38; under the covert of whose righteousness we are to *draw near unto God*, without slavish fear, *in the full assurance of faith*, in this as well as in other holy ordinances; and we are to *rejoice in the Lord*, in this spiritual feast, as the Jews were *bound* to do in their *solemn feasts*, Deut. xvi. 14, 15.

There are other abuses of this ordinance, like to those of baptism fore-mentioned, whereby it is rendered opposite rather than subservient to the life of faith. Some put it in the *place of Christ*, by trusting on it as a *work of righteousness* for procuring God's favour, or an ordinance sufficient to confer grace to the soul by the very work wrought. Others make it so necessary, that they account *faith* as not sufficient without it; and therefore they will partake of it, if they can possibly, though it be in a *disorderly manner*, upon their *sick-beds*, when they are in fear of death, as their *viaticum*. The Papists do horribly idolize it by their figment of transubstantiation,

and the adoration of their breadden god, and their sacrifice of the mass for the sins of the quick and the dead. We ought warily to conceive, that the true body and blood of Christ are given to us, with the bread and wine, in a *spiritual mysterious manner*, by the unsearchable operation of the holy Spirit, *uniting Christ and us together by faith*, without any transubstantiation in the outward elements.

6. *Prayer* is to be made use of as a mean of living by faith in Christ, according to the new man. And it is the making our requests with supplication and thanksgiving. That it is to be used so, as an eminent mean, appears, because God *requireth it*, 1 Thess. v. 17. Rom. xii. 12; it is our *priestly work*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. compared with Psalm cxli. 2; and the *property of saints*, 1 Cor. i. 2; and God is a *prayer-hearing God*, Psalm lxxv. 2. God will be prayed to by his people, for the benefit that he is minded to bestow upon them, when once he hath enabled them to pray; though at first he is *found of them that seek him not*, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Phil. i. 19, 20; that he may prepare them for thanksgiving, and make benefits double benefits to them, Psalm lxxvi. 16—19. and l. 15. 2 Cor. i. 10, 11. Though his will be not changed by this means, yet it is accomplished, ordinarily, and his purpose is to accomplish it this way. And, therefore, *trusting assuredly* should not make us neglect, but rather perform this duty, 2 Sam. vii. 27. Christ, the mediator of the new covenant, by whom justification and sanctification are promised, is also the mediator for acceptance of our prayers, Heb. iv. 15, 16. The spirit that sanctifieth us, begeteth us in Christ, and sheweth the things of Christ to us, is a *spirit of prayer*, Zech. xii. 10. Gal. iv. 6. He is as fire inflaming the soul, and making it to mount upward in prayer to God.

Prayerless people are dead to God. If they are children of Zion, yet they are but still-born, *dead children*, they *cry not*, Acts ix. 11; not *written among the living in Jerusalem*; Heathens in nature, though Christians in name, Jer. x. 25. It is a duty so great, that it is put for-

all the service of God, as a fundamental duty, which if it be done, the rest will be done well, and not without it; and other ordinances of worship are helps to it, Isa. lvi. 7. It is the great means whereby faith doth exert itself to perform its whole work, and poureth itself forth in all holy desires and affections, Psalm lxii. 8; and so yields a sweet savour, as Mary's box of precious spikenard, Mark xiv. 3. John xii. 3; and so the same promises are made to faith and prayer, Rom. x. 11--13. It is our continual incense and sacrifice whereby we offer ourselves, our hearts, affections, and lives to God, Psalm cxli. 2.

We act all grace in it; and must act in this way, or else we are not likely to act it in any other way. And as we act grace, so we obtain grace by it, and all holiness, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. Luke xi. 13. Heb. iv. 16. Psal. lxxxi. 10. Our riches come in by it. Israel prevails while Moses holds up his hands, Exod. xvii. 11. By prayer Hannah is strengthened against her sorrows, 1 Sam. i. 15, 18. Peace is continued, Phil. iv. 6, 7. the disordered soul is set in order by it, as Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 18. Psal. xxxii. 1—5. *Incense was still burnt while the lamps were dressed*, Exod. xxx. 7, 8. It is added to the spiritual armour, not as a particular piece of it, but as a means of putting on *all*, and making use of *all aright*, that we may *stand in the evil day*, Eph. vi. 18. It is a means of transfiguring us into the likeness of Christ in holiness, and making our spiritual faces to shine, as Christ was transfigured bodily, whilst he prayed, Luke. ix. 29. and Moses' face shone, whilst he talked with God, Exod. xxxiv. 29. Hence the frequent use of this duty is commended to us, Eph. vi. 18. *praying always*, on all *seasons* and *opportunities*; and by the example of the saints, in public with the congregation, Acts ii. 42. and x. 30, 31. Solemn acts of prayer should be continued daily Mat. vi. 11. yea, several times in a day, as *morning and evening sacrifice*, Dan. vi. 10. Psal. xcii. 2. or *thrice*, Psal. lv. 17. besides *special occasions*, Jam. v. 13, 14. and *brief ejaculations*, that hinder not other business, Psal. cxxxix. 8. 2 Sam. xv. 31. Neh. ii. 4. prayers should

be solemn in our closets, Mat. vi. 6. in families, Acts x. 30, 31. And as sacrifices were multiplied on the Sabbath days, and days of atonement, at other appointed seasons, Numb. xxviii. besides the continual burnt offerings; so ought prayers also.

In a word a christian ought to give up himself *eminently to this duty*, Psal. cix. 4. *without limits*, Psal. cxix. 164. But the great work is to practise this duty rightly for holiness, only by faith in Christ. Here we had need say, "Lord teach us to pray," Luke xi. 1. and that not only as to the matter, but as to the manner; both which are taught by Christ, in some measure, in that brief pattern of prayer which he taught his disciples. But for the understanding of it, we must consult the whole word, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. And we have need of the Spirit of Christ, to guide us in the duty; and therefore we are taught to *pray by the Spirit*, i. e. the *Holy Ghost*, Jude 20. Eph. ii. 18. The Spirit of God only guideth and enableth our souls to pray aright. And, that you may do so, take these rules:

1. You must pray with your *hearts and spirits*, Isa. xxvi. 9. John iv. 24. where the Spirit of Christ, and of prayer, *principally resides*, Gal. iv. 6. Eph. i. 17. with *understanding*, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 16. for we are *renewed in knowledge*, Col. iii. 10. 2 Pet. i. 3. so that praying in ignorance cannot sanctify. And it must be with sincere hearty desire of the good things we ask in prayer; for God seeth the heart, Psal. lxii. 8. Prayer is chiefly a *heart work*, Psal. xxvii. 8. God heareth the heart without the mouth, but never heareth the mouth acceptably without the heart, 1 Sam. i. 13. Your prayer is odious hypocrisy, mocking of God, and taking his name in vain, when you utter petitions for the *coming of his kingdom*, and *doing of his will*, and yet hate godliness in your heart. This is lying to God and flattering with your lips, but no true prayer; and so God takes it, Psal. lxxviii. 36. And you must have a *sense* of your wants and necessities, and that God only can supply them, 2 Chron. xx. 12. And *servency*, in those desires is required, Jam. v. 16. And you must pray with

*attention*, minding yourselves what you pray, or else you cannot expect that God should mind it, Dan. ix. 3. *Watch* unto it, 1 Pet. iv. 7. Set yourselves to this duty intently. God seeth where your hearts are wandering when you pray without attention, Ezek. xxxiii. 21. When you say never so many prayers without understanding, attention, affection, it is not praying at all, but sinning, and playing the hypocrite; as papists mumble over their Latin prayers upon beads by tale, prating like parrots what they cannot understand. And thus ignorant people say over their forms of English prayers, and account they have well discharged their duty, though their heart prayed none at all, and they were minding other things. 'This is a mere lip-labour and bodily exercise, offering a *dead carcase* to God; *plain deceit*, Mal. i. 13, 14. *a form of godliness*, with *denying the power*, 2 Tim. iii. 5. whereby popery hath cheated the world of the power of this, and all other holy ordinances. "They say, God minds and knows what they speak and approves it." I answer, "he sees them so as to judge them for hypocrites, and profane persons, for not knowing, minding, and approving what they utter themselves:" "He hath no pleasure in fools," Eccl. v. 1, 4. They would not deal so with an earthly prince.

2. You must pray in *the name of Christ*; for *the Spirit glorifies Christ*, John xvi. 14. and leadeth us to God through Christ, Eph. ii. 18. As I have shewed, that *walking in the Spirit*, and *walking in Christ*, is all one; so, praying in the Spirit, and by and through Christ. And as we are to *walk in the name of the Lord*, and likewise to do *all things in his name*, so we are to *pray in his name*, as he has also commanded us, John xiv. 13, 14. It is not enough to conclude our prayers, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*; but we must come for blessings in the garments of our elder brother, and must depend upon his worthiness and strength for all. So also we must praise God *for all things in his name*, as things received for his sake, and by him, Eph. v. 20. We must lay hold on his strength only, and plead nothing, and

own nothing, for our acceptance, but him. We must not plead our own works arrogantly, like the proud pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 12. except only as fruits of grace, and rewards of grace; Isa. xxxviii. 3. *Praying in the Spirit*, is upon gospel, not legal principles, Rom. viii. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 3. with great humiliation, and sense of unworthiness, Psal. li. with broken spirit; with despair of acceptance, otherwise than upon Christ's account, Dan ix. 18. If your enlargements, strugglings, meltings, have been never so great; yet without this all is abominable.

3. Hence you must not think to be *accepted for the goodness of your prayers*, and *trust on them as works of righteousness*; which is making idols of your prayers, and putting them into the place of Christ; quite contrary to *praying in the name of Christ*. Thus the papists hope to be saved by saying their tale of prayers upon their bead-rows; and they have indulgences granted upon their saying so many prayers, and of such sort. Yea, some ignorant protestants trust on their prayers as *duties of righteousness*; and they think one prayer to be more acceptable than another, by reason of the *holiness of the form*, if it were made by *holy men*; especially the *Lord's prayer*, which they use to help them in any exigence or danger; how little soever they can apply it to their own case, they make an idol of it. And some use it, and others places of scripture, as a spell or charm, to drive away the Devil. And others think their prayers more acceptable in one place than another, by reason of the *holiness of the place*, John iv. 21, 24. 1 Tim. ii. 8. Others trust on their *much speaking*, Mat. vi. 7. which they call the enlarging of their hearts. They think, to put off God, and to stop the mouth of conscience with a few prayers, and so to live as they list.

4. Pray to God your *father through Christ as your Saviour*, in faith of *remission of sins*, and your *acceptance with God*, and the *obtaining* all other things which you desire of him, as far as is *necessary for your salvation*, Jam. i. 5—7. and v. 15. 1 John v. 14, 15. Mark xi. 24. Heb. x. 14. Psal lxii. 8. lxxxvi. 7. lv. 16. lvii.

1. and xvii. 6. This is praying *in Christ*, Eph. ii. 12. and by the "Holy Ghost, the spirit of adoption," Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. Without this, prayer is lifeless and heartless, and but a dead carcase, Rom. x. 14. Psal. lxxvii. 1, 2. By this you may judge whether you have prayed rightly, more than your melting affection, or largeness in expression. Though you be not assured that you shall have every thing you ask, yet every thing that is good. This faith you must endeavour to act, and therefore, if any sin lie on your conscience, you must strive first to get the pardon of it, Psal. xxxii. 1, 5. li. 14, 15; and purification of it by faith, that you may 'lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting,' 1 Tim. ii. 8. The *sin of wrath* there is especially mentioned, because that is *contrary to love* and *forgiving others*. Here lies the strength, life and powerfulness of prayer. Set faith on work, and you will be powerful and prevail.

5. You must strive in prayer, to *stir up*, and *act every other sanctifying grace, through faith moving you thereto*. Thus your spiknards will yield their smell, as *godly sorrow*, Ps. xxxviii. 18; *peace*, Is. xxvii. 5; *joy*, Psal. cv. 3; *hope*, Ps. lxxi. 5; *desire and love to God*, Psalm iv. 6; and *love to all his commands*, Ps. cxix. 4, 5; and *to all his people out of love to him*, Psalm cxxii. 8. You must also *seek the Spirit himself, in the first place*, Luke xi. 13. Psal. xxxvii. 5. and *all spiritual things*, Mat. vi. 33. Praying only for carnal things, shews a carnal heart, and leaves it carnal. Pray for *faith*, Mark ix. 24; and for such things as may serve most for the glorifying God, 2 Chron. i. 11, 12. And for outward things, you must act faith in *submission* to his will. And this prayer sets you in a holy frame, Mat. xxvi. 42. Luke xxii. 42, 43. *Hallowing God's name*, must be your aim, Mat. vi. 9; not your lusts, James iv. 3.

6. Strive to bring your soul into *order by this duty*, however disordered by guilt, anguish, inordinate cares, or fears, Psal. xxxii. 1, 5, lv. 16, 17, 20, 22. and lxix. 32. Phil. iv. 6, 7. 1 Sam. i. A watch must be often wound up. You must *wrestle in prayer*, against your unbelief, doubting, fears, cares, reluctancy of the flesh,



to that which is good ; against all evil lusts and desires, coldness of affection, impatience, trouble of spirit ; every thing that is contrary to a holy life, and the graces and holy desires to be acted for yourselves or others, Col. iv. 12. Rom. xv. 30. Stir up yourselves to the duty, Col. ii. 1, 2. Isa. lxiv. 7. Though the flesh be cross and reluctant, we must not yield, but resist by the spirit, Mat. xxvi. 41. And thus we shall find the spirit *helping our infirmities*, Rom. xviii. 26, 27. Though God seem to defer long, we must not faint, or be discouraged, Luke xviii. 1, 7. The greater our agonies be, the more earnestly we are to pray, Psal. xxii. 1, 2. Luke xxii. 42. This is "to continue instant in prayer," Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18. Thus you find prayer a great heart-work, and not such a thing as may be done while you think on other things, and that it requireth all the strength of faith and affection that you can possibly stir up. Thus you must get a holy frame.

7. You must make a good use of the *whole matter*, and *all the manner* of prayer, as ordinary and extraordinary exigencies may require, to *stir up grace in you by wrestling*, and to *bring your hearts into a holy frame*. And, in *confession*, you must condemn yourself according to the flesh, but not as you are in Christ. You must not deny that grace that you have, as if you were only wicked hitherto, and now to begin again ; which hinders praise, for grace received, in those that are already converted. In *supplication*, you must endeavour to work up your heart to a *godly sorrow*, Ps. xxxvii. 18 ; and a holy sense of your own sin and misery ; and lay before you the aggravations thereof, Psal. li. 3. and cii. *Complaint* and *lamentation* are one great part of prayer, as the *Lamentaions of Jeremiah*. And you must add *pleadings* to your petitions, with such arguments as may serve to strengthen faith, and to stir up and kindle affection, Job xxiii. 4. Which pleadings are taken from *attributes*, Num. xiv. 17, 18 ; *promises*, 2 Sam. vii. 26, 28, &c. Gen. xxxii. 9, 12 ; the equity of our cause, Psalm xvii. 2, 5 ; and the advantage and benefit of the thing, to the *glory of God*, and our comfort, Psal. cxv

1, 2. and lxxix. 9, 10, 13. Naked petitions are not sufficient, when the soul findeth special csuse of *struggling* and wrestling against corruptions and dangers, and for mercies. Christ's large prayer, John xvii. is made up of *pleading*, and a very few petitions. And we must make use also of *praise* and *thanksgiving*, to stir up peace, joy, love, &c. Gen. xxxiii. 10. Ps. xviii. 1, 2, 3. xxxiii. 1. lxxiv. 14. and civ. 34. Especially be much in praising for mercies of the new state in Christ, Ep. i. 3. and then you will the better give thanks for all the benefits on this account, Eph. v. 20. 1 Thess. v. 18. and plead those benefits, to stir up to faith and duty. That brief ejaculation, "Lord have mercy upon me," is very good to be used; but it never will answer the end and use of the whole duty of prayer; as some lazy carnal people would have it, and so harden themselves in the neglect of the duty; though the large improvement and use of all the matter of prayer, and at all times, is not required, but only as ordinary or extraordinary occasions may require.

8. You must *not confine and limit your prayers by any prescribed form*; seeing it is impossible that any such forms should be contrived, as should answer and fit all the various conditions and necessities of the soul at all times. I do not condemn *all* forms, as that made by Christ, *the Lord's prayer*; though it were easy to shew, that Christ never intended it for a *form of prayer*, so as to bind any to the *precise form* of words: and it is plain the Spirit of God hath expressed it in *different words*, Mat. vi. Luke xi. But better to pray by that form, or other forms, than not at all. It is uncharitable to take away crutches or wooden legs from lame people; yet none will look upon them but as *dead helps*. I say, it is *utterly unlawful* to bind ourselves to *any form*; because none can answer the duty *fitly* and *suitably* to particular occasions, Ep. vi. 18. Phil. iv. 6. John xv. 7. 1 Thes. v. 18. Ep. v. 20. You must make the whole scripture your *common prayer-book*, as the primitive church did; being the language of the Spirit, reaching all occasions and conditions, and fittest to speak to God in. And if you use

a form, you must follow it by the Spirit, farther than the form goes, according as he shall guide you by the word; or else you *quench the Spirit*, 1 Thes. v. 19. If you know the principles of prayer, and have a lively sense of your necessities, and hearty desires of God's grace and mercies, you will be able to pray without forms, and your affections will bring forth words out of the fulness of your heart. And you need not be over solicitous and timorous about words; for, doubtless, the Spirit, who is the help to us in speaking to men, will also much more help us to speak to God, if we desire it, 1 Cor. i. 5. Mar. xiii. 11. Luk. xii. 11, 12. And God regards not *eloquent* words, nor *artificial* composure; neither need we regard it in private prayer, Isa. xxxviii. 14. If you limit yourself to forms, you will thereby grow formal, and limit the Spirit.

7. Another means appointed of God, is *singing of Psalms*, i. e. songs of any sacred subject, composed to a tune, hymns or songs of praise, and spiritual songs, of any sublime spiritual manner; as Psal. xiv. and the song of Solomon. God hath commanded it in the New Testament, Col. iii. 16. Eph. v. 19; though now in these days, many questions whether it be an ordinance or no. And there were many commands for it under the Old Testament, Psal. cxlix. 1—3. xcvi. 1. and c.—Moses and the children of Israel, sang before David's time, Exo. xv. David composed psalms by the Spirit, to be sung publickly, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—3; yea, privately too, Psal. xl. 3. 2 Cor. xxix. 30. Psal. cv. 2. Other songs also were made upon several occasions, and used, whether they were parts of scripture or no; as Solomon made a *thousand and five*, 1 Kings iv. 32. And they made songs upon occasions: which teacheth, that it is lawful for us to do so, if they be according to the word, Isa. xxxviii. 9, 14.

The *matter* of scripture may be sung, Psal. cxix. 54. Christ and his disciples *sung a hymn*, Mat. xxvi. 30. supposed to be one of David's psalms; and they were written for our instruction, as well as other parts of

scripture, Rom. xv. 4, &c. and so to be used now in singing. They speak of the things of the New Testament, either figuratively or clearly: and we may understand them better now, than the Jews could under the Old Testament, 2 Cor. iii. 16. Gal. ii. 17.

Christians heretofore practised this duty as well as Jews, Acts xvi. 25. Hence their *antelucani hymni* [the hymns they sung before day-light] were noted by Pliny a Heathen. These songs, or hymns, may be used at all times, especially for holy mirth or rejoicing, James i. 13. But this text is not to be taken exclusively in singing, any more than in prayer, Psal. xxxviii. 18. 2 Chro. xxxv. 25.

But the *right manner* of this duty is *chiefly* to be noted, and, here (1) trust not upon the *melody of the voice*, as if that pleased God, who delighteth only in the melody of the *heart*, Col. iii. 16. Neither let the recreating your senses be your end, which is but a carnal work: "Not a musical string, but the heart; nor crying, but loving sounds in the ear of the Lord."—This spiritual music was typified by musical instruments of old. (2) You must use it for the *same end* as *meditation* and *prayer*, according to the nature of what is sung, *i. e.* to quicken *faith*, 2 Chro. xx. 21, 22. Acts xvi. 25, 29. and *joy* and *delight* in the Lord, *glorifying* in him, Psal. civ. 33. cv. 3. cxlix. 1, 2. xxxiii. 1—3. You are never right until you can be heartily merry in the Lord, to act joy and mirth holily, James v. 13. Eph. v. 19; and also to get more *knowledge*, and *instruction* in heavenly mysteries, and in your duty *teaching and admonishing*, Col. iii. 16. Many psalms are *Maschils* (as their title is) *i. e.* psalms of instruction.

Thus we are to sing such psalms as speak in the first person, though we cannot apply them to ourselves, as words uttered by ourselves, concerning ourselves; and in this we do not lie. David speaks of Christ as of himself, as a pattern of affliction and virtue to instruct others; and we sing such psalms, not as our words, but as words of our instruction. And therein, we do not lie, any more than the Levites, the sons of Korah,

or Jeduthan, or other musicians bound to sing them, Psal. v. xxxix. and xlii. Though it be good to personate all the good that we can; yet we have so much liberty in the use of psalms, that though we cannot apply all to ourselves, as speaking and thinking the same, yet we shall answer the end, if we sing for our instruction, as in Psal. vi. xxvi. xlii. ci. and cxxxi. And psalms have a peculiar fitness for teaching and instructing; because the pleasantness of metre, said or sung, is very helpful to the memory. See Duet. xxxi. 19, 21. And there is a variety of curious artifice in the placing of words in the psalms upon this account; and there is some alphabetical psalms, as Psal. xxv. xxxiv. xxxvii. cxi. cxii. cxix. cxlv. And, by the melody of the sound, the instruction comes in with delight, as a physical dose sugared; and sorrow is naturally allayed, to fit the mind for spiritual joy; and distempered passions appeased, 2 Kings iii. 15. 1 Sam. xvi. 14—16. So Orpheus, Amphion, and others, were famous for civilizing rude and barbarous people by music.

8. *Fasting* is also an ordinance of God to be used for the same purpose and end, and is commended to us under the New Testament, Mat. ix. 15. and xvii. 21. 1 Cor. vii. 5. And we have examples of it, Acts xiii. 2, 3. and xiv. 23. Under the Old Testament, there were frequent commands for it, and examples, chiefly upon occasion of extraordinary afflictions, 1 Sam. vii. 6. Neh. ix. 1. Dan. ix. 3. x. 2, 3. 2 Sam. xii. 16. Psal. xxxv. 13. 2 Sam. iii. 31. Joel ii. 13; besides the anniversary great day of atonement, Lev. xvi. 29, 31. when every one was to fast on pain of being cut off. There is a prophecy of the same for the times of the New Testament, Zech. xii. 12. It was used most in extraordinary occasions, and it is a help to holiness by faith; because it is a meet help for extraordinary prayer and humiliation, Joel i. 14. and ii. 12. But the great matter is, to use it rightly, as followeth:

(1) Trust not in it as meriting or satisfying, as Papists and Pharisees do, Luke xviii. 11. putting it in the place of Christ; or as means of *itself* conferring grace,

and mortifying lusts, as many do, who may sooner kill their bodies than their lusts, or as any purifying *rite*; yea, or *in* or *for itself* acceptable to God, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. xii. 9. Col. ii. 16, 20, 23. Imagine not, that prayer is not acceptable without it, for this is against faith. Fasts as well as feasts are no *substantial* parts of worship, because not spiritual, but bodily; though, under the Old Testament, they were parts, as instituted rites, figurative and teaching. But that use is now ceased; as that on the day of atonement, and so many significative rites adjoined to fasting, as sackcloth, ashes, rending garments, pouring out water, lying upon the earth. The kingdom of God consists not in these things, Rom. xiv. 16. The soul is *hardened by trusting in them*, Isa. lviii. 2, 6. Zech. vii. 5, 6, 10.

(2) Use it as a *help* to *extraordinary prayer* and humiliation; that the mind may not be unsuited for it by eating, drinking, or bodily pleasures, Joel ii. 13. Isa. xxii. 12, 13. Zech. xii. 10—14. It is good only as a help to the soul, removing impediments. The best fast is, when the mind is taken off from delights, as in John the Baptist's case, Mat. iii. 4. when heaven and godly sorrow take off the soul, Zech. xii. 10—14.

(3) Use it in such a *measure*, as may be proper for its end; without which it is worth nothing. If abstinence divert your mind, by reason of a gnawing appetite, then you had better eat sparingly, as Daniel, in his great fast, chap. x. 2, 3. Some have not enough of spiritual mindedness, to give up themselves to fasting and prayer without great distraction; and such had better eat than go beyond their strength in a thing not absolutely necessary, which produceth only a slavish act, as in the case of virginity, 1 Cor. vii. 7—9, 34—36. Christ would not have his weak disciples necessitated to the duty, Mat. ix. 14, 15. In the mean time, such should strive to be sensible of the weakness and carnality that hinders their use of this excellent help.

9. You may expect here something to be spoken of *vows*. But I shall only say this of them. Think not to bring yourselves to good by vows and promises, as if the

strength of your own law could do it, when the strength of God's law doth it not. We bring children to make promises of amendment; but we know how well they keep them. The Devil will urge you to vow, and then to break, that he may perplex your conscience the more.

10. Another great mean is, *fellowship and communion with the saints*, Acts ii. 42.

FIRST. This mean must be used *diligently*. Whosoever God saveth, should be added to some visible church and come into communion of other saints; and, if they have no opportunity for it, their heart should be bent towards it. Sometimes the church is in the wilderness, and hindered from visible communion and ordinances; but they that believe in Christ, are always willing and desirous so to add and join themselves, Acts ii. 41, 44, 47. "And they continued steadfastly in fellowship," 1 John ii. 19. And God binds his people to leave the fellowship and society of the wicked as much as may be, 2 Cor. vi. 17. And so far as we are necessitated to accompany with them, we ought to shew charity to their souls and bodies, 1 Cor. v. 9. This communion with saints is to be exercised in *private converse*, Psal. ci. 4—7. and in *public assemblies*, Heb. x. 25. Zech. xiv. 16, 17. And duobtless, it ought to be used for the attainment of holiness; as may be proved.

1st. In general, because God *communicates all salvation* to a people ordinarily by, or in a church; either by taking them into fellowship, or holding forth the light of truth by his churches to the world. A church is the *temple of God*, where God dwells, 1 Tim. iii. 15. He hath placed his name and salvation there, as in Jerusalem of old, Joel ii. 32. 2 Chron. vi. 5, 6. He hath given to his churches those officers and ordinances whereby he converts others, 1 Cor. xii. 28. His *springs* are there, Psalm lxxxviii. 7. He makes the several members of a church, instruments for the conveyance of his grace and fulness from one to another, as the members of the natural body convey to each other the fulness of the head, Eph. iv. 16. All the *new-born* are brought forth and



nourished by the church, Isa. lxvi. 8—11. xlix. 20. and lx. 4; and therefore, all that would be saved should join to a church; they shall prosper that love the church, so as to stand in its gates, and unite as members, brethren and companions, Psal. cxxii. 2, 4, 6. And wrath is denounced against those that are not members of it, at least of the mystical body; they cannot have God for their father, that have not that for their mother, Song i. 7, 8. This maketh those that do desire fellowship with God, to take hold of the skirts of his people, Zech. viii. 23.

2d. In particular, fellowship with the saints conduceth to holiness many ways.

[1] By manifold *helps* to holiness, which are received thereby: as, (1) The *word* and *sacraments*, Acts ii. 42. Isa. ii. 3. Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. and all the *ministerial office* and *labour* in watching over souls, Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. Isa. xxv. 6. None of these helps can be enjoyed without fellowship of saints, each with other. And, if believers had been to have stood single by themselves, and not maintained fellowship with each other for mutual assistance and common good, none of these things could have continued; neither could any believer have been extant at this day, in any ordinary way, but even the very name of believers had been abolished. (2) *Mutual prayer*, which is the more forcible when all pray together, Mat. xviii. 19, 20. 2Cor. i. 10, 11. James v. 16. Rom. xv. 30. (3) *Mutual admonition, instruction, consolation*, to help each other when they are ready to fall, and to promote the good work in each other, 1 Thes. v. 14. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise," Prov. xiii. 20. 'Wo to him that is alone when he falleth,' see Eccl. iv. 9—12. In church fellowship there are many helpers, many to watch. Soldiers have their security in company; and the church is compared to an *army with banners*, Song vi. 4, 10. So, for quickening affections, *iron sharpeneth iron*, Prov. xxvii. 17. Likewise, the *counsel of a friend*, like ointment and perfume, *rejoiceth the heart*, Pro. xxvii. 9. Yea, the wounds and reproofs of

the righteous are as precious balm, Psal. cxli. 4. (4) *External supports*, which mitigate afflictions, and are to be communicated mutually, Eph. iv. 28. 1 Pet. iv. 9, 10. The affliction is increased, when none careth for our souls, Psal. cxlii. 4. (5) *Excommunication*, when offences are exceeding heinous, or men obstinate in sin. This ordinance is appointed for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved, 1 Cor. v. 5. Better and more hopeful it is to be cast out by the church, for a person's amendment, than to be wholly without the church at all times; and better to be a lost sheep, than a goat or swine; for excommunication cuts off actual communion only, until repentance be evident; and not absolutely abolisheth the title and relation of a brother and church-member, though it judgeth one to be an unnatural brother, and a pernicious rotten member at present, not fit for acts of communion. Besides, admonition is still to be afforded, 2 Thess. iii. 15. and any means are to be used that may serve to cure and restore him. The church reacheth forth a hand to help such a person, though it doth not join in fellowship with him; or it communicateth to him, not with him. Yet if he have not so much grace as to repent, it "were better he had never known the way of righteousness," 2 Pet. ii. 21. (6) The *lively examples of saints* are before our eyes in church fellowship, to teach and encourage, Phil. iii. 17. and iv. 9. 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. 2 Cor. ix. 2.

2. By those *holy duties* that are required, and do appertain to this fellowship and communion. All acts that belong to this fellowship are *holy*; as, *hearing*, receiving the *sacraments*, *prayer*, *mutual admonitions*, &c. I shall consider some holy acts, whereby we are rather *doers* than *receivers*, and which we perform towards others; as, (1) *Godly discourse*, teaching, admonishing, comforting others in Christ; which we cannot so perform towards others, as towards those we have strict fellowship with in Christ. Others like swine, trample these jewels under foot; and saints therefore are forced to refrain from godly discourse in their company, Amos v. 10, 13. vi. 10. But holy discourse is

most acceptable to the saints, and to be practised with them, Mal. iii. 16. and is greatly to the advantage of holiness, Pro. xi. 25. (2) In *helping, succouring and conversing* with Christ in his members. We do good to Christ in his members in church fellowship; and we ourselves as members of Christ, act as well *from* as *towards* Christ; whereas, if we do good to others *without*, we do good only *for* Christ's sake, but not *to* Christ, Mat. xxv. 35—49. Psal. xvi. 2, 3. We have advantage in general, to do all duties that belong to us as members of Christ to fellow members; which we cannot do, if separate from them; as natural members cannot perform its office to other members if separate from them.

SECONDLY. The means must be used *rightly*, for the attaining of holiness *only in Christ*.

1. One rule is, *do not trust on church membership, or on churches*, as if this or that fellowship commended you to God of itself; whereas, a church-way is but a help to fellowship with Christ, and walking in the duties of that fellowship. The Israelites stumbled at Christ, by trusting on their carnal privileges, and set them in opposition to Christ; whereas, they should have only made them subservient to Christ. Confidence in them should have been abandoned, as Paul's example teacheth, Phil. iii. 3—5, &c. We must not glory in Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, but in Christ; else we *glory in the flesh, and in men*, 1 Cor. i. 12, 13. iii. 21. Trusting on church privileges is an inlet to formality and licentiousness, Jer. vii. 4, 8—10. and thence the corruption of churches, Isa. i. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 20.

2. Follow no church *any farther* than you may *follow it in the way of Christ*; and keep fellowship with it only upon the account of Christ, and because it follows and hath fellowship with Christ, 1 John i. 3. Zec. viii. 23. If a church revolt from Christ, we must not follow it, how ancient soever it may be; as the Israelitish church was not to be followed, when it persecuted Christ and his apostles; and many, by adhering to that church, fell farther from Christ, Phil. iii. 6. Acts vi. 13, 14. xxi. 28.

We are indeed to *hear the church*, but not *every one* that calls itself so; and none any farther than it speak-

eth as a *true church* according to the *voice of the shepherd*, John x. 27. We must subject ourselves to ministers of Christ, and stewards of his mysteries, 2 Cor. iv. 1. but must give up ourselves first to Christ *absolutely*, and to the church according to the *will of Christ*, 2 Cor. viii. 5. Our *fear* must not be *taught by the precepts of men*, Mat. xv. 3—9. The doctrines of any men are to be *tried* by the scripture, whatever authority they pretend to, Acts xvii. 11. An unlimited following of the church-guides, brought the church into Babylon, and into all manner of spiritual whoredoms and abominations. You are not *baptized* into the name of the *church*, but into the *name of Christ*, 1 Cor. i. 13.

3. Do not think, that you must attain this or that *degree of grace*, before you join yourself in *full communion* with a church of Christ in *all ordinances*. But when you have given up yourself to Christ, and learned the duty of communion; give up yourself unto a church of Christ, though you find much weakness and inability. For, church ordinances of special communion, serve to strengthen you; and how can you get heat, being alone? The disciples, as soon as converted, embraced all *fellowship*, Acts ii. 42. And churches, that they may forward holiness in themselves and others, must be willing to receive Christ's weak ones, and to feed his lambs as well as his better grown sheep, and *bear them on their sides*, Isa. lxvi. 12. How else shall Christ's weak ones grow strong by that nourishment that other parts supply?—They are very unreasonable indeed, that expect christians should grow, out of church-fellowship, to as high a degree of grace, as those that are in those pastures of tender grass; and are unwilling to receive any that they are like to have occasion to bear with: whereas, *bearing* and *long-suffering* are great duties of church-fellowship, Eph. iv. 2, 3. Rom. xiv. 1. The weakest have most need to be strengthened by church-communion, and we are bound to receive them, as Christ hath received us, Rom. xv. 7. We do not reject or separate the weaker parts of the body, 1 Cor. xii. 23, 24; but put more honour and comeliness on them.

Admission into churches, in the apostolic times, was gained upon profession, with a shew of seriousness; though tares got in among the wheat, and many scandals arose to the reproach of the ways of Christ; and the greatest strictness will not keep out all hypocrites; yet the best care must be taken so far as not to hinder any that have the least truth of grace.

4. Keep communion with a church, for the *sake of communion with Christ*, 1 John i. 3. Zech. viii. 23. Therefore you must keep communion in Christ's pure ways only; and, in them, seek Christ by faith; that, in the enjoyment of these advantages, you may receive and act the godliness and holiness fore-mentioned, and aim at spiritual flourishing and growth in grace. Choose therefore fellowship with the *most spiritual churches*.—Judge of churches and men, according to the rule of the *new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 16, 17; and *try them*, Rev. ii. 2. iii. 9; otherwise a church may corrupt you. See that thy communion answer its *end*, tend to thy *edification*, not to destruction; which you ought to take all the advantages of, not only in the church where you are a member, but by communion with other churches, as occasionally providence casts you among them; for your communion with a particular church, obligeth you to communion with all churches of Christ in his ways, as you are called thereto, 1 Cor. x. 17.—And it is an abuse to say, we are members of a church in London, and therefore refuse fellowship with a church in the country; seeing if we are members of Christ, we are members of one another, whether single persons or churches. And endeavour to join in fellowship with the godly of the place where you live, that you may have the more frequent and constant communion. Onesimus, though converted at Rome, must be one of the church of the Colossians, because he lived there, Col. iv. 6. compared with Philemon, ver. 10. The *union* of the saints together in *distant* societies, according to the places where they lived, was the *apostolic practice*, and cannot be violated without sin. Such can best watch over one another, admonish, comfort,

and edify each other, which is the benefit of the communion. And they indeed destroy communion, that seek a communion where they cannot have this benefit. I only add to this head, that church-fellowship, without practising the ways of Christ, is but a conspiracy to take his name in vain, and a counterfeit church-fellowship of hypocrites. It is impudence for such to invite others to their communion; tyranny, to compel them. Every christian is bound to seek a better church-fellowship by reformation; and those that do so, are the best sons of Christ's church, who inquire, is this the way to enjoy Christ? a church-way being appointed to enjoy Christ therein.

5. Especially, *leave not the church in persecution*, when you need its help most, and are then most tried whether you will cleave to it. This is a sign of apostacy, Heb. x. 25, 26. Mat. xxiv. 9—14. We should cleave to one another as *one flesh*, even to prisons and death, or else we deny Christ in his members, Mat. xxv. 43.

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#### DIRECTION XIV.

That you may seek holiness and righteousness only by believing in Christ, and walking in him by faith, according to the former directions, take encouragement from the great advantage of this way, and the excellent properties of it.

#### EXPLICATION.

THIS direction may serve as an *epilogue*, or conclusion, by stirring us up into a lively and cheerful embracing those gospel rules before mentioned, by several weighty motives. Many are kept from seeking godliness because they know not the way to it; or the way that they think of, seems uncouth, unpleasant, disadvantageous, and full of discouragement; like the way through the wilderness to Canaan, which wearied the Israelites, and occasioned their *many murmurings*, Num. xxi. 4.

But this is a way so good and so excellent, that those that have the true knowledge of it, and desire heartily to be godly, cannot dislike it. I shall shew the *excellency*

of it, in several particulars. But you should first call to mind what is the way I have taught, viz. *union and fellowship with Christ*; and by faith in Christ, as discovered in the gospel; not by the law, or in a natural condition, or by thinking to get it before we come to Christ, to procure Christ by it, which is striving against the stream; but that we must first apply Christ and his salvation to ourselves, for our comfort, and that by confident faith; and then walk by that faith, according to the new man in Christ, and not as in a natural condition: and use all means of holiness rightly for this end. Now, that this is an excellent advantageous way, appears by the following desirable *properties* of it.

1. It hath this property, that it tends to the *abasement of all flesh*, and *exaltation* of God only, in his grace and power through Christ. And so it is agreeable to God's design in all his works, and the end he aimeth at, Rom. xi. 6. Isa. ii. 17. Ezek. xxxvi. 21—23, 31, 32. Psal. cxlv. 4; and a fit means for the attaining the end we ought to aim at, in the first place, which is the hallowing, sanctifying, and glorifying God's name in all things; and is the first and chief petition, Mat. vi. 9; and is the end of all our actings, 1 Cor. x. 31; was the end of giving the law, Rom. iii. 19, 20. God made all things for Christ, and would have him have the preeminence in all, Col. i. 17, 18; that the *Father may be glorified in the Son*, John xiv. 13. And this property of it is a great argument to prove, that it is the way of God, and hath the character of his image stamped upon it. We may say that it is *like him*, and a way according to his heart; as Christ proveth his doctrine to be of God by this argument, John vii. 18. And Paul proveth the doctrine of justification, and of sanctification, and salvation by grace through faith, to be of God; because it excludes all *boastings* of the creature, Rom. iii. 27, 28. 1 Cor. i. 29—31. Eph. iii. 8, 9. This property appears evidently in the mystery of sanctification by Christ in us through faith. For (1) it sheweth, that we can do nothing by our *natural will*, or any *power* of the flesh; and that God will not enable us to do any thing that way, Rom. viii.



18. however nature be stirred up by the law, or natural helps, Gal. iii. 11, 21. And so it serveth to work self-lothing and abasement, and to make us look upon nature as desperately wicked, and past cure, and not to be reformed, but put off by *putting on Christ*. It remains wicked, and only wicked, after we have put on Christ.

2. It sheweth, that all our good works, and living to God, are not by our *own power* and *strength* at all, but by the power of Christ, living in us by faith; and that God enabled us to act, not merely according to our natural power, as he enableth carnal men, and all other creatures, but above our own power, by Christ united to us, and in us through the Spirit. All men *live, move, and have their being in him*; and by his universal support and maintenance of nature in its being and activity they act, Heb. i. 3; so that the glory of their actings, as creatures, belongs to God. But God acts more immediately in *his people*, who are one flesh and one Spirit with Christ, and act not by their own power, but by the power of the Spirit of Christ in them, as closely united to him, and being the living temples of his Spirit: so that Christ is the immediate principal agent of all their good works, and they are Christ's works properly, who works all our works in us and for us; and yet they are the saints' works by fellowship with Christ, by whose light and power the faculties of the saints do act, and are acted, Gal. ii. 20. Eph. iii. 16, 17. Col. i. 1; so that we are to ascribe all our works to God in Christ, and thank him for them as free gifts, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Phil. i. 11. God enableth us to act not by ourselves, as he doth others, but by himself. The wicked are supported in acting only according to their own nature; so they act wickedly: thus all are said to *live, move, and have their being in God*, Acts xvi. 27. But God enableth us to conquer sin, not by ourselves, but by himself, Hos. i. 7; and the glory of enabling us doth not only belong to him, which the Pharisee could not but ascribe to him, Luke xviii. 11; but also the glory of doing all in us. And yet we work as one with Christ, even as he works as

one with the Father, by the Father working in him.— We live as branches by the juice of the vine, act as members by the animal spirits of the head, and bring forth fruit by marriage to him as our husband, and work in the strength of him as the living bread we feed on. He is all in the new man, Col. iii. 11 ; and all the promises are made good in him, 2 Cor. i. 20.

2dly. It hath this property, that it *consisteth well with other doctrines* of the gospel ; which contrary errors do not. And hence this is the way to confirm us in many other points of the gospel ; and therefore appears to be true by harmony with other truths, and fit linking with them in the same golden chain of the mystery of godliness ; and evidenceth them to be true by their harmony with it. I have shewed, that men's mistaking the true way of sanctification, is the cause of perverting the scripture in other points of faith, and of declining from the truth, to Popish, Socinian and Arminian tenets, because men cannot seriously take that for truth, which they judge not to be according to godliness. But this way of holiness will evidence, that these gospel doctrines, which they refuse, are according to godliness ; and that those tenets, which a blind zeal for holiness moveth them to embrace, are indeed contrary to holiness ; however Satan appeareth to their natural understandings as an *angel of light* in such tenets. Whatever men say, it is certain that legalists are indeed the Antinomians. I shall instance in some *truths* confirmed by it.

1. The doctrine of *original sin*, viz. not only the guilt of Adam's sin, and a corrupt nature, but utter impotency to do spiritual good, and proneness to sin, which is death to God, in all people according to nature, Psal. li. 5. Rom. v. 12. There is an utter inability to keep the law truly in any point. Many deny this doctrine ; because they think, that if people believe this they will excuse their sins by it, and be apt to despair of all striving to do good works, and leave off all endeavours, and grow licentious ; and they think it will be more conducing to godliness to hold and teach, either that there

is no original sin or corruption derived from Adam, or at least, it is done away; either in the world by universal redemption, or in the church by baptism; and that there is free will restored, whereby the people are able to incline themselves to do good, that men be more encouraged to set upon good works, and their neglect made inexcusable. All this is, indeed, forcible against seeking and endeavouring for holiness by the free-will and power of nature, and is the way of endeavouring which I directed you to avoid. If there were no new way to holiness since the fall, original sin might make us despair; but there is a *new birth*, a *new heart*, a *new creature*, and therefore we have directed you to the seeking of holiness, by the Spirit of Christ, and willing good freely by a spiritual power, as new creatures, partakers of a divine nature in Christ. Yea, it is necessary to know the first Adam, that we may know the second, Rom. v. 12; to believe the fall and original sin, that we may be stirred up to fly to Christ by faith for holiness by free gift, knowing that we cannot attain it by our own power and free-will, 2 Cor. i. 9. Mat. ix. 12, 13. Rom. vii. 24, 25. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Eph. v. 14. There were no need of a new man, or a new creation, if the old were not without strength and life, John iii. 5, 6. Eph. ii. 8. But original deadness cannot hinder God's working faith and hungerings and thirstings after Christ, by the Spirit, through the gospel, in those that God chooseth to walk holily and blameless before him in love, 1 Thess. i. 4, 5. Acts xxvi. 18. And so we are made alive in a *new head*, and become branches of another vine, living to God by the Spirit, not by nature.

2. It confirms us in the doctrine of *predestination*; which many deny, because they say, it takes men off from endeavours, as fruitless, by telling men, that all events are predetermined. This argument would be more forcible against endeavours by the power of our own *free-will*, but not at all against endeavours for holiness by the *operation of God*, giving us faith and

all holiness by his own Spirit working in us through Christ. We are to trust on Christ for the grace of the elect, and God's good will towards men, Mat. iii. 17. Luke ii. 14. Psal. cvi. 4, 5. Election by *grace* destroys seeking by *works*, but not by *grace*, Rom. xi. 5, 6.— And we are here taught to seek for salvation only in the way of the elect; and we may conclude, that holiness is to be had by God's will, and not by our own; and it may move us to desire holiness by the will of God, Rom. ix. 16. Psal. cx. 3. And seeing, it appears, by this doctrine of sanctification through Christ, that we are God's workmanship, as to all the good wrought in us, Phil. ii. 12, 13. Eph. ii. 10; we may well admit, that he hath appointed his pleasure from eternity, without infringing the natural liberty of our corrupt wills, which reacheth not unto good works, Acts xv. 18. compared with 36. Man's natural free-will may well consist with God's decree; as in Paradise, *Decretum radix contingentiae*.

3. It confirms us in the true doctrine of *justification* and *reconciliation* with God by *faith*, relying on the merits of Christ's blood, without any works of our own; and without considering faith as work to *procure favour* by the righteousness of the act, but only as a hand to receive the gift, or as the very eating and drinking of Christ actually, rather than any kind of condition entitling us to him as our food. This great doctrine of the gospel many hate, as breaking the strongest bounds of holiness, and opening a way to all licentiousness; for they reckon the conditionality of works to attain God's favour, and avoid his wrath, and the necessity of them to salvation, are the most necessary and effectual impulses to all holiness; and they account, that the other doctrine opens the flood-gates of licentiousness. And truly this consideration would be of some weight, if people were to be brought to holiness by moral suasion, and their natural endeavours stirred up by the terms of the law, and by slavish fears and mercenary hopes; for the force of these mo-

tives would be altogether enervated by the doctrine of justification by free grace.

But I have already shewed, that a man, being a guilty dead creature, cannot be brought to serve God out of love, by the force of any of these motives; and that we are not sanctified by any of our own endeavours to work holiness in ourselves, but rather by faith in Christ's death and resurrection, even the same whereby we are justified; and that the urging of the law stirs up sin; and that the freedom from it is necessary to all holiness, as the apostle teacheth, Rom. vi. 11, 14. vii. 4, 5. And this way of sanctification confirms the doctrine of justification by faith, as the apostle informeth, Rom. vii. 1. For, if we are sanctified, and so restored to the image of God, and life by the Spirit, through faith; it is evident that God hath taken us into his favour, and pardoned our sins by the same faith, without the law; or else we should not have the fruits and effects of his favour thereby to our eternal salvation, Rom. viii. 2. Yea, his justice would not admit his giving life without works, if we were not made righteous in Christ by the same faith. And we cannot trust, to have holiness freely given us by Christ, upon any rational ground, except we can also trust on the same Christ for free reconciliation, and forgiveness of sins for our justification; neither can guilty cursed creatures, that cannot work by reason of their deadness under the curse, be brought to a rational love of God, except they apprehend his loving them first freely, without works, 1 John iv. 19.—The great objection and reason of so many controversies and books written about it, is, because they think that men will trust to be saved however they live.—But sanctification is an effect of justification, and floweth from the same grace; and we trust for them both by the same faith, and for the latter in order to the former. And such a faith, be it ever so confident, tendeth not to licentiousness, but to holiness; and we grant, that justification by grace destroys holiness by

legal endeavours, but not by grace. So that there is no need to live a papist, and die an antinomian.

4. It confirms us in the doctrine of *real union with Christ*, so plentifully held forth in scripture; which doctrine some account as a vain notion, and cannot endure it, because they think it worketh not holiness, but presumption: whereas, I have shewed, that it is absolutely necessary for the enjoyment of spiritual life and holiness, which is treasured up in Christ; and that so inseparably that we cannot have it without a real union with him, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. 1 John v. 12. John vi. 53. xv. 5. 1 Cor. i. 30. Col. iii. 11. The members and branches cannot live without union with the vine and head; nor the stones be part of the living temple, except they be really joined mediately or immediately to the corner-stone.

5. It confirms us in the doctrine of a *certain final perseverance* of the saints, John iii. 36. vi. 37. v. 24. 1 John iii. 9. 1 Thes. v. 24. Phil. i. 6. Jo. x. 23, 29. iv. 14. They think this doctrine maketh people careless of good works. I answer, it maketh people *careless* of seeking them by their *own natural strength*, and in a way of slavish fear; but *careful* and courageous in trusting on the *grace of God* for them, when they are brought by regeneration, heartily to desire them, Rom. vi. 14. Numb. xiii. 30; setting upon the doing of them in that grace, 1 Thes. v. 8—11. And I have shewed, that all fears of damnation will never bring persons to work out of love; and that nothing will do it but a comfortable doctrine.

3dly. It hath this excellent property, that it is the *never failing*, effectually *powerful*, alone *sufficient*, and *sure way* to attain to *true holiness*. They that have the truth in them, find it; and the truly humble find it. People strive in vain, when they seek it in any other way; therefore venture with the lepers, else you die, 2 Kings vii. Isa. iv. 2, 3, 7. All other ways either stir up sin, or increase despair in you; as seeking holiness by the law, and working under the curse doth;

and breeds but slavish and hypocritical obedience at best, and restrains sin only, instead of mortifying it, Gal. iv. 25. The Jews sought another way, and could not attain it, Rom. ix. And all that seek it another way "shall lie down in sorrow," Isa. l. 11. And that,

(1) Because, as we are under the law in our natural state, we are *dead* and *children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 1, 3. And the law curseth us, instead of helping us, Gal. iii. 10; and giveth no life by its obligation, Gal. iii. 21. And we cannot work holiness in ourselves, Rom. v. 6. So that a humble person finds it in vain, to seek holiness by the law, or his own strength; for *the law is weak through our flesh*. Seeking a pure life without a pure nature, is building without a foundation. And there is no seeking a new nature from the law, for it bids us make brick without straw, and saith to the cripple, *walk*, without giving any strength.

(2) In this way only God is *reconciled* to us, even in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 19. Eph. i. 7. And so he loves us, and is a fit object of our love, 1 John iv. 19. And so, in this way only, we have a new and divine nature by the Spirit of Christ in us, effectually carrying us forth to holiness with life and love, Rom. viii. 5. Gal. v. 17. 2 Pet. i. 3, 4; and have new hearts according to the law; so that we serve God heartily according to the new nature, and cannot but serve him, 1 John iii. 9. So that here is a sure foundation for godliness, and love to God with all our heart, might and soul; and sin is not only restrained, but mortified, and not only the outside made clean, but the inside, and the image of God renewed; and holy actings surely follow. We sin not according to the old nature, though we are not perfect in degree, because of the old nature.

4thly. It is a *most pleasant* way to those that are in it, Prov. iii. 17: and that in several respects.

1. It is a most *plain* way, easy to be found, to one that sees his own deadness under the law, and is so re-



newed in the spirit of his mind, as to know and be persuaded of the truth of the gospel. Though such may be troubled and pestered with many legal thoughts and workings; yet, when they seriously consider things, the way is so plain, that they think it folly and madness to go in any other way; so that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein," Isa. xxxv. 8. Pro. viii. 9. The enlightened soul cannot think of another way, when truly humbled, Pro. i. 8. And when we are in Christ, we have his Spirit to be our guide in this way, 1 John ii. 27. John xvi. 13. So that we need not be filled with such distracting thoughts, about knowledge of our way as legal Spirits are about thousands of cases of conscience, which do so multiply upon them, that they despair of finding out the way of religion, by reason of so various doubts, and manifold intricacies. Here we may be sure, that God will so far teach us our duties, as that we shall not be misled with error, so as to continue in it to destruction, Psal. xxv. 8, 9, 14. What a trouble is it to a traveller to be doubtful of his way, and without a guide, when his business is of great importance, upon life and death? It is even a heart-breaking. But those that are in this way, may be sure that though they sometimes err, yet they shall not err destructively, but shall discern their way again, Gal. iv. 7—10.

2. It is *easy* to those that walk in it, *by the Spirit*, though it be difficult to get into it by reason of the opposition of the flesh, or devil scaring us, or seducing us from it. Here you have holiness as a free gift received by faith, an act of the mind and soul. Whosoever will, may come, take it, and drink freely; and nothing is required but a willing mind, John vii. 38. Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. But the law is an intolerable burden, Mat. xxiii. 5. Acts xv. 10. if duty be laid upon us by its terms. We are not left in this way to conquer lusts by endeavours; which is a successful work; but what is duty is given, and the law is turned into promises, Heb. vii. 6—13. Ez. xxxvi. 25, 26. Jer. xxxi. 33. xxxii. 40.

We have all now in Christ, Col. iii. 11. ii. 9, 10, 15, 17. This is a catholic medicine instead of a thousand. How pleasant would this free gift, *holiness*, be to us if we knew our own wants, inabilities, and sinfulness! How ready are some to toil continually, macerate their bodies in a melancholy legal way, to get holiness, rather than perish for ever! And therefore how ready would we be, when it is only, *take and have! Believe, and be sanctified and saved!* 2 Kings v. 13. Christ's *burden is light* by his Spirit's bearing it, Mat. xi. 10. No weariness, but *renewing of strength*, Isa. xl. 31.

3. It is a *way of peace*, Prov. iii. 17; free from fears and terrors of conscience, that those meet with unavoidably who seek salvation by works; for *the law worketh wrath*, Rom. iv. 15. It is not the way of mount Sinai, but Jerusalem, Heb. xii. 18, 22. The doubts of salvation that people meet with, arise from putting some condition of works between Christ and themselves; as hath appeared in this discourse. But our walking in this way, is by faith, which rejects such fears and doubtings, John xiv. 1. Mark v. 36. Heb. x. 19, 22. It is free from Satan or any evil, Rom. viii. 31, 32; and free from all slavish fears of perishing by our sins, 1 John ii. 1, 2. Phil. iv. 6, 7; faith laying hold on infinite grace, mercy and power to secure us; "The Lord is our keeper and shade on the right hand," Ps. cxxi. 5. Free and powerful grace answers all objections.

4. It is a way that is *paved with love*, like Solomon's chariot, Song iii. 10. We are to set God's loving kindness, and all the gifts of his love, still before our eyes, Ps. xxvi. 2. Christ's death, resurrection, intercession, before our eyes; which breed *peace, joy, hope, love*, Rom. xv. 13. Isa. xxxv. 10. You must believe for your justification, adoption, the gift of the Spirit, and a future inheritance; your death and resurrection with Christ. In believing for these things, your whole way is adorned with flowers, and hath these fruits growing on each

side ; so that it is through the garden of Eden, rather than the wilderness of Sinai, Acts ix. 31. It is the office of the Spirit our guide, to be our comforter, and not a *spirit of bondage*, Rom. viii. 15. Peace and joy are great duties in this way, Phil. iv. 4—6. God doth not drive us on with whips and terrors, and by the rod of the school-master, the law ; but leads us, and wins us to walk in his ways, by allurements, Song i. 3. Hos. xi. 3, 4. See such allurements, 2 Cor. v. 15. vii. 1. Rom. xii. 1.

5. Our very *moving, acting, walking*, in this way is a *pleasure and delight*. Every good work is done with pleasure ; the very labour of the way is pleasant. Carnal men wish duties were not necessary, and they are burdensome to them ; but they are pleasant to us ; because we do not gain holiness by our own carnal fear, with regret and grief, and setting conscience and the law against them, to hinder their actings ; but we act naturally, according to the new nature, and perform our new spiritual desires by walking in the ways of God through Christ ; and our lusts, and pleasures in sin, are not only restrained, but taken away in Christ ; and pleasures in holiness freely given us, and implanted in us, Rom. viii. 5. Gal. v. 17, 24. John iv. 34. Psal. viii. 5. xl. 8. cxix. 14, 16, 20. We have a new taste and savour, love and liking by the Spirit of Christ ; and look on the law, not as a burden, but as our privilege in Christ.

5thly. It is a *high exalted way*, above all other ways. Unto this way the prophet Habakkuk is exalted, when, upon the failure of all visible helps and supports, he resolves to *rejoice in the Lord*, and *joy in the God of his salvation* ; and by making God his strength by faith, “his feet should be as hinds feet, and should walk upon his high places,” Hab. iii. 18, 19. These are the *heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, that God hath set us in, “being quickened and raised up together with him,” Eph. ii. 5, 6.

1. We live *high* here ; for “we live not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” and *Christ in us*, with all his fullness, Rom. viii. 1, 2. Gal. ii. 20. v. 25. We walk in *fellowship with God dwelling in us*, and *walking in us*,

2 Cor. vi. 16, 18. And therefore our works are of higher price and excellency, than the works of others ; because they are *wrought in God*, John iii. 21. and are the *fruits* of God's Spirit, Gal. v. 23. Phil. i. 11. And we may know that they are accepted and good, by our gospel principles, which others have not, Rom. vii. 6.

2. We are enabled to do the *most difficult duties*, Ph. iv. 1, 3. and nothing is too hard for us. See the great works done by faith, Heb. xi. Mark ix. 23. works that carnal men think folly and madness to venture upon, (they are so great) and honourable achievements in doing and suffering for Christ.

3. We walk in an *honourable state* with God, and on *honourable terms* ; not as guilty creatures, to get our pardon by our works, not as bond servants, to earn our meat and drink, but as sons and heirs, walking towards the full possession of that happiness to which we have a title ; and so we have much boldness in God's presence, Gal. iv. 6, 7. We can approach nearer to God than others, and walk before him confidently, without slavish fear ; not as strangers, but as such who are of his own family, Eph. ii. 19, 20. And this prompts us to do greater things than others ; *walking as free men*, Rom. vi. 17, 18. John viii. 35, 36. It is a *kingly way* ; the law to us is a royal law, a law of liberty, and our privilege ; not a bond and yoke of compulsion.

4. It is the way only of those that are *honourable and precious in the eyes of the Lord*, even his elect and redeemed ones, whose special privilege it is to walk therein ; "no unclean beast goeth there," Isa. xxxv. 8, 9. No carnal man can walk in this way, but only those that are *taught of God*, John vi. 44—46. Nor would it have come into their hearts without divine revelation.

5. The preparing this way cost Christ very dear. It is a *costly way*, Heb. x. 19, 20. 1 Pet. iii. 18.

6. It is a *good old way*, wherein thou mayest follow the footsteps of all the flock.

7. It is the way to *perfection*. It leads to such holiness, which shall, in a while, be absolutely perfect. It

differs only in degrees and manner of manifestation, from the holiness of heaven. There the saints live by the same Spirit; and the same God is all and in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28. John iv. 14. and have the image of the same spiritual man, 1 Cor. xv. 49. Only here we have but "the first fruits of the Spirit," Rom. viii. 24. and "live by faith and not by sight," 2 Cor. v. 7. and "are not full grown in Christ," Eph iv. 13. Sanctification in Christ, is glorification begun; as glorification is sanctification perfected.

# THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION OPENED AND APPLIED.

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For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness ; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Rom. iii. 23—26.

THE apostle having confuted and overthrown all justification, either of Jew or Gentile, by works, in the foregoing discourse, is now proving what he asserted, verses 21, 22, viz. “that the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe ; for there is no difference ;” shewing that now in the gospel-times, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile ; but that, in the justification of both, the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested. This he proveth, by shewing what the gospel teacheth concerning the way of justification ; for the gospel only reveals the righteousness of God, Rom. i. 16, 17. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”

So the words are a declaration of the gospel-way of justification by the righteousness of God ; and that so clearly and fully, and the benefit spoken of so great and glorious, being the first benefit that we receive by union with Christ, and the foundation of all other benefits ; that my text is accounted to be *evangelium*

*evangelii*, a principal part of the written gospel, as briefly, and yet fully expressing this excellent point, more than any other text.

Note, in the words particularly, the *subject* declared and explained, viz. justification of persons, or their being justified: and the meaning of it here, is, to be cleared and freed from all ambiguities and misunderstanding. Justification signifieth *making just*, as sanctification is *making holy*, glorification *making glorious*: but not making just by infusion of grace and holiness into a person, as the papists teach, confounding justification and sanctification together; but making just, in trial and judgment, by a judicial sentence discharging guilt, freeing from blame and accusation; approving, judging, owning, and pronouncing a person to be righteous. Use alters the signification. It is a juridical word, or law term, and hath reference to trial and judgment. 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of any man's judgment; yea, I judge myself; for I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." And it is so opposed to condemnation in judgment, Deut. xxv. 1. "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." And Mat. xii. 37. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."—And it is opposed both to accusation and condemnation. Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth?" And so Job ix. 20. "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me;" ch. xiii. 15. "I will maintain mine own ways before him;" ver. 18. "I have ordered my cause, I know that I shall be justified;" ver. 19. "Who is he that will plead with me?" Here justification is plainly opposed unto the accusation, or fault. And it is as plainly opposed to the passing sentence of condemnation; 1 Kings viii. 32. "Go and



judge thy servants, condemning the wicked to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness." In this sense it is a sin to justify the wicked, Isa. v. 23. Prov. xvii. 15. Job xxvii. 5. Actions must be existing already, and brought to trial, that they may be justified, Job xxxiii. 32. Isa. xliii. 9, 26.

Justice or righteousness consists not in the intrinsic nature of an action, but in its agreeableness to a rule of judgment; so that actions are called just and righteous, by an extrinsical denomination, with relation to God's rule of judging. And this righteousness appears by trying the action according to the rule, and by making an estimate of it; which estimate is either approving or disapproving, justifying or condemning, finding it to be a sin or no sin, or breach of the law. So we may say of the righteousness of persons, with reference to such habits or actings. And because the righteousness of righteous persons appears when they are brought to trial and judgment, therefore they are said then to be in a special manner justified, as if they were then made righteous, viz. when the righteousness is declared; as Christ was said to be begotten the Son of God at the resurrection, Acts xiii. 33; because he was then declared to be the Son of God, Rom. i. 4. And in the same sense, we that are adopted at present, are said to *wait for our adoption*, i. e. the manifestation of it, Rom. viii. 23. And thus even God is said to be justified, when we judge of his actings as we ought to do, and deem them to be righteous, Job xxxii. 2. Psal. li. 4. Luke vii. 29; though nothing can be added to the infinite righteousness of God. And *wisdom* is said to be *justified of her children*, Mat. xi. 19. So justification is not a *real* change of a sinner in himself (though a real change is annexed to it) but only a *relative* change with reference to God's judgment. And thus the word is used in the text; and so also in matters of judicature throughout the scripture; yea, some counted against the papists,

that it is no where in scripture used otherwise, except by a trope borrowed from this as the proper sense.— And in the text, it is beyond all doubt meant of being *deemed* and *accounted just in the sight of God*; for such a justification is here only treated of, as appears in the text, and before, ver. 19, 20. And I have been the longer explaining the sense of the word, because the mistaking it, by reason of its composition occasioned that popish error, whereby the benefit signified by it is obscured, yea, overthrown; so that we had need to contend for the sense of the word.

In the text we have the eight following things.

1. The *persons* justified; (1) *sinnrs.* (2) Such sinners of all sorts that *shall believe*, whether Jews or Gentiles.
2. The *justifier*, or *efficient* cause, God.
3. The *impulsive* cause, *grace*.
4. The *means* effecting, or *material* cause, the *redemption* of CHRIST.
5. The *formal* cause, the *remission* of sins.
6. The *instrumental* cause, *faith*.
7. The *time* of *declaring*, the *present* time.
8. The *end*, that God may appear just.

From hence, therefore, will arise several useful observations, all tending to explain the nature of justification; which shall be laid down and cleared out of the text, and confirmed particularly; and then I shall make use of them altogether.

OBSERV. I. "They who are justified, are *sinnrs.*, such who are come short of the glory of God," *i. e.* of God's approbation, John v. 44; of God's image of holiness, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Eph. iv. 24; of eternal happiness, 1 Thes. ii. 12. Rom. v. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

1. The law condemns *all sinners*, and strikes them as with a thunderbolt, Rom. iii. 20; and adjudgeth them to shame, confusion, and misery, instead of glory and happiness, by the strict terms of it, Rom. ii. 6—12; which none fulfils, neither can do, Rom. viii. 7, neither Jews nor Gentiles. There is no hope, if free grace restore them not.

2. Christ came only to save *sinner*s, and died for this end, Rom. v. 6. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."—And, 1 Tim. i. 15. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."—Mat. ix. 13. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Mat. xviii. 11. "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost."—And God must be believed on to salvation, as a God that *justifieth the ungodly*; he must *believe*, as one that worketh not, *on him that justifieth the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5.

**OBSERV. II.** "Sinners of all sorts, without difference, whether Jews or Gentiles, that believe, are the subjects of this justification." This is the scope of the apostle, to shew, that whereas Jews and Gentiles, were universally condemned by the light and law of nature, or the law written; so the "righteousness of God is upon all them that believe," ver. 21, 22, without difference. This was a great point to be defended against the Jews in the apostles' time, who appropriated justification to themselves, in a legal way, and to such as were proselytes to the law and circumcision; and therefore the apostle Paul vehemently urged it, Rom. x. 11, 12. And it was a point newly revealed to the apostles, that the Gentiles might be accepted without turning Jews, and much prized as a very glorious revelation, Acts x. 28, 45. Eph. iii. 4, 5, 8. Col. i. 25—27. And it is confirmed,

1. Because notwithstanding the *Jews'* privilege of the law, by reason of breaking the law, they had as much need of free justification as the Gentiles, and no worthiness above the Gentiles by their works, but were rather great sinners, Rom. ii. 23, 24. And when there is equal need and worth, God might righteously justify one as well as another, Rom. iii. 9.

2. God is the God of the *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*, Rom. iii. 29; as he promised, Rom. iv. 9, 12, 13. Gal. iii. 8. Isa. xix. 25. Zech. xiv. 9.

3. Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, that he might be the father of those that believe, though uncircumcised, that they might inherit the same blessing, Rom. iv. 10—12.

4. This will appear further, by shewing that justification is only by *faith*, and without dependence upon the law, merely by the *righteousness of another*; and so Jews and Gentiles are alike capable of it.

**OBSERV. III.** “That the justifier, or efficient cause of justification, is God.” It is an act of God, Rom. viii. 23. “*It is God that justifieth.*” He only can justify authoritatively and irreversibly.

1. Because he is the *law-giver*, and hath power to *save* and *destroy*, James iv. 12. This case concerns God’s law, and can only be tried at his tribunal. He is the judge of the world, Gen. xviii. 25. It is a small worthless thing to be justified by man, or by ourselves merely, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

2. To him the *debt* of suffering for sin, and acting righteousness, is owed: and therefore he only can give a discharge for payment, or a release of the debtor, Psa. li. 4. Mark ii. 7.

**OBSERV. IV.** “God justifieth souls freely by his grace, *δωρεαν τη αυτου χαριτι*, freely by his grace.” One of these expressions had been enough; but this redoubling it, sheweth the importance of the truth, to quicken our attention the more. Here is the *impulsive* cause of justification, and his free manner of bestowing it accordingly. And this signifies God’s free undeserved favour, in opposition to any works of our righteousness, whereby it might be challenged as a debt to us, Rom. iv. 3. “Now, to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt!” xi. 6. “If by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.” Eph. ii. 8, 9. “By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” 2 Tim. i. 9. “Who hath saved us, and called us

with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." Ver. 10.

"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ," &c. Grace is mercy and love shewed freely, out of God's proper motion; shewing mercy, because he will shew mercy; and loving us, because he will love us, Rom. ix. 15. And this is confirmed,

1. Because there *was* not, nor *is* any thing in us, but what might move God to condemn us; for *we have all sinned*, Eph. ii. 3. Ez. xvi. 6.

2. Because God would take away *boasting*, and have his grace glorified and exalted in our salvation. He will have all the praise and glory, though we have the blessedness; Eph. ii. 7, 9. "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." And so Rom. iii. 27.

OBSERV. V. "God justifieth sinners through the *redemption* that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." This is the *effecting* means, or *material cause* of our justification, viz. redemption and propitiation through the blood of Christ; which is the righteousness of God treasured up in him.

By *redemption* is meant, properly such a deliverance as is by paying a price; and so the words *redeem* and *redemption*, are frequently used, Exo. xiii. 13. Num. iii. 48, 49, 51. Lev. xxv. 24, 51, 52. Jer. xxxii. 7, 8, Neh. v. 8. From this proper signification, it is borrowed to signify a deliverance without price, Luke xxi. 28. Eph. i. 14. iv. 30. or rather, by a metonymy of the cause, put for the highest effect, the state of glory; so that the state of glory is called *redemption*, as being the completing and crowning effect of Christ's redemption; therefore it is called *the purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14.

By a *propitiation*, is meant, that which appeaseth the wrath of God for sin, and wins his favour. And this propitiation of Christ is two ways typified; first in

propitiatory sacrifices, whose blood was shed. And, secondly, by the mercy seat; which was called the *propitiation*, because it covered the ark, wherein was the law; and the blood of the sacrifices for atonement was sprinkled by the High Priest before it. And this mercy-seat was a sign of God's favourableness to a sinful people, in residing among them, and was called *ἱλαστήριον* Heb. ix. 5.

Now this doctrine appears confirmed for these reasons.

1. Because Christ, by the will of God, gave himself a *ransom* for us, to redeem us from sin and punishment, wrath and curse, Tit. ii. 14. "He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity!" He gave himself to death for us; was delivered for our offences: his death was the price of our redemption, that we might be justified in God's sight. God gave him up to death; he spared him not, that he might be made righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. Mat. xx. 28. "He gave his own life a ransom for many; and so, (1 Tim. ii. 6.) he bought us with this price," 1 Cor. vi. 20. "He redeemed us not with silver and gold, but with his precious blood, as of a lamb without spot," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. 2 Pet. ii. 1. Rev. v. 9. He suffered the penalty due to us for sin, 1 Pet. ii. 14. "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree!" Gal. iii. 13. "He was made a curse for us," and thereby redeemed us from the curse of the law; and that he might be made a *curse*, he was made *sin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Isa. iii. 5, 6. He subjected himself to the law, in active as well as passive obedience, Gal. iv. 4. and obeyed his Father even to death, doing and suffering at his commandment, John xiv. 31. Heb. x. 7. and his obedience was for our justification. Compare Rom. v. 19. with Phil. iii. 8, 9. So Christ satisfied both our debt of righteousness, and debt of punishment; for our faultiness, taint of sin, and want of righteousness as well as for our guilt, and obnoxiousness to punishment; that we might be free from wrath, and deemed righteous in God's sight. His suffering in our room was the consummating act of redemption; and so all is attributed to

it, Heb. ii. 9, 10. even to his blood, though other doings and sufferings concur, 2 Cor. viii. 9. We are righteous by him as we are guilty by Adam, Rom. v. 12.

2. God accepted this *price* as a satisfaction, to his justice, which he shewed in raising Christ from the dead, and so acquitting him for all our sins: *he was justified in the Spirit*, 1 Tim. iii. 16; *for us*, Rom. iv. 25; *raised for our justification*, see Rom. viii. 33, 34. "It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen from the dead." And, Heb. x. 14, "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Eph. v. 2. "This sacrifice was a sweet smelling savour unto God." If Christ had sunk under the weight of our sins, and had not been raised, the payment had not been finished, and so the debt not discharged, John xvi. 10. "Of righteousness, because I go to my father."

3. This redemption is in Christ, as to the benefit of it; so that it cannot be had, except we be in Christ, and have Christ: so the text expresseth and sheweth that he is the *propitiation*; and, as such, he is *our righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30. We have redemption and righteousness in him, Eph. ii. 7. 2 Cor. v. 21; and therein our freedom from condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Christ died, that his *seed* might be *justified*, Isa. liii. 10, 11; those that are in him by spiritual regeneration, 1 Cor. iv. 15.

OBSERV. VI. "The *formal* cause of justification, or that wherein it consists, is, the *remission of sins*; i. e. not only the guilt and punishment is removed, but the fault; because it is a pardon grounded on justice, which clear-eth the fault also. By him we are justified from all things that the law chargeth us with," Acts xiii. 39.

In men, subject to a law, there is no middle condition between not imputing sin, and imputing righteousness: and so these terms are used as equivalent, Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified," &c. Rom. iv. 6—8. 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. Rom. v. 17. This is through the bloodshed of Christ, Eph. i. 7. Mat. xxvi. 28.



OBSERV. VII. "God justifieth a sinner through *faith* in Christ's blood." Faith is the *instrumental* cause of receiving this benefit, faith in the blood of Christ.

1. This faith is believing on Christ, that we may be justified by him; Gal. ii. 16. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." We believe in Christ for justification, out of a sense of our inability to obtain justification by works.

2. This faith doth not justify us, as an act of *righteousness*, earning and procuring our justification by the *work of it*, as under the law; diametrically opposite to grace and free gift, which excludes *all* consideration of any works of ours, to be our righteousness, under any diminutive terms whatever, whether you call it *legal* or *evangelical*, though you reckon it to be no more than the payment of a pepper-corn, Rom. xi. 6. Faith in this case is accounted a *not-working*, Rom. iv. 5. And it is not *faith* that stands instead of the righteousness of the law, but the *righteousness of Christ*, which satisfieth for what we ought to have done or suffered, as hath been shewed.

3. God justifieth by faith, as the *instrument* whereby we receive Christ and his righteousness, by which we are justified properly; and we are *justified by faith* only *metonymically*, by reason of the righteousness received by it: and to be *justified by faith* and *by Christ*, is all one, Gal. iii. 8. Rom. v. 19. By faith we receive *remission of sins*, Acts xxvi. 18. x. 43. Its effect is, the reception of justification, not the working it, as a man may be said to be maintained by his hands, or nourished by his mouth, when those do but receive that which nourisheth, his food and drink. The cup is put from the *liquor* in the cup, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27. See Rom. i. 17. iii. 22. *Christ is in us by faith*, Eph. iii. 17; received, ate, drunk, John i. 12. vi. 51—54.

4. This faith is to be understood *exclusively*, to all our works for justification. We defend, against the pa-

pists, *justification by faith only*; and there is nothing more fully expressed in scripture-phrase, Rom. iii. 28. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 8, 9. Rom. iv. 16.

5. We must understand faith in a *full* sense of receiving *remission* of the *fault*, as well as of the *punishment*. We believe God accounts not the fault to us of the least sin. And where faith is said to be *accounted for righteousness*, it is because of the *object* it receives, Rom. iv. 5—8. 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. We believe Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as our sins are to him; or else we receive not remission of sins by believing; which is contrary to charging us with sin and condemnation: which *charging* signifies *imputing sin*, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Together with the removal of the charge of sin, we receive the *gift of righteousness*, Rom. v. 17. And this we have in the reception of Christ's redemption and bloodshed, Eph. i. 7. Mat. xxvi. 28.

OBSERV. VIII. "That God, in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, aimed to declare his righteousness, now under the gospel, for the remission of sins that are *past* as well as *present*;" of those sins that were *past*, and committed under the Old Testament, which was God's time of *forbearing* in *pardoning*, long before his justice was actually satisfied by Christ's atonement, Heb. xiii. 8. Rev. xiii. 8. Mat. xviii. 26. The *ground* of these pardons is now revealed by Christ's coming, Isa. li. 5, 9. lvi. 1. Dan. ix. 24. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10; that those pardons may be no blemish to the justice of God now satisfied, Ex. xxxiv. 7. Psal. lxxxix. 10.

1. By this *righteousness* is meant that *righteousness of God* mentioned in the proposition, Rom. iii. 21, 22. of which the text is but a confirmation, viz. the righteousness of God; not his essential righteousness, that which is an essential property of God, but even that righteousness, which is upon *all them that do believe*; Christ's righteousness, which is the *end of the law*, Rom. x. 3, 4; and therefore called *God's righteousness*, that which Christ wrought for us, which is given to us, and

we receive by faith ; that whereby Christ answered the law for us ; by which, as the price, he redeemed us ; which is called *God's righteousness*, because it is of God's *working*, and it only hath God's *acceptance* and *approbation* ; as Christ is called the *Lamb of God*, because God provided him and accepts him as an offering, John i. 29. Upon the like account, *Christ's kingdom* is called the *kingdom of God*, because God's own hand set it up and maintained it, and rules it, Eph. v. 5. Christ who became obedient to death, to work this righteousness, was God as well as man, Phil. ii. 6, 8. And this is that righteousness which the apostle opposeth to his own, that which is in Christ ; which he had through faith. And this is the *righteousness of God here*, and in other places ; "the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9.

2. God aimed at *declaring*, in the gospel times, his *righteousness in forgiving sins past*, in the time of God's *forbearance* under the Old Testament, Rom. iii. 25 ; and also in justifying those that believe in Christ at present ; for it was by the righteousness of the same Christ, that sins were pardoned under the Old Testament, as well as now, Heb. xiii. 8. Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8 ; only the righteousness was not actually fulfilled and revealed then, but it was shadowed out then, by the sacrifices, ransoms, redemptions, &c. Heb. x. 1, 2, 9, 10. So this was a time of God's forbearance : because he pardoned sins, as if it were, without present payment and satisfaction. He had patience, and did not exact the debt, until Christ paid all, Mat. xviii. 26. But then God promised, that he would reveal his righteousness in due time, Isa. lvi. 1. and i. 5, 6. Psal. xcvi. 2. Dan. ix. 24. And this he hath done by the appearance of Christ, 2 Tim. i. 10.

OBSERV. IX. "The *end* of this manifestation is, that God may appear *just*, in forgiving sins past as well as present, and the *justifier* of him that believeth in Jesus." Here the essential property of God is exalted, and ap-

pears glorious in justifying by the forementioned righteousness of God.

1. As God justifieth *freely* by grace, he would appear hereby just in justifying sinners; for, it would be a blemish to God's justice, to forgive without a satisfaction, and righteousness performed; and therefore, though he be gracious and merciful, yet he will not *clear the guilty*, Ex. xxxiv. 7. Gen. xviii. 25. Ex. xxiii. 7. And so the saints of God concluded, that God had a righteousness and redemption, whereby he forgave sin, though it was not then revealed, Psal. li. 14. cxix. 7, 8. and cxliii. 1, 2. God would have *justice and mercy* to meet in our salvation, Psal. lxxxv. 10.

2. God would have it appear, that he only is just, and therefore saveth us, not by our own righteousness, but by his: which is indeed the more exalted by our unrighteousness occasionally, though God is not therefore *unrighteous in taking vengeance*, Rom. iii. 4, 5. Dan. ix. 7.

3. God would appear to be the only *procurer* and *worker* of our righteousness, and so our justifier by way of procurement, as well as by way of judgment; and so he will justify us by a righteousness of *his own*, and not by *our own*, Isa. liv. 17. xlv. 22, 24, 25. that we may *glory in the Lord only*, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

USE I. It serves for *instruction*, by way of *encouragement* and *consolation*; that the great happiness of those that are in Christ, is that their sins are forgiven, and they accounted just in the sight of the judge of the world, through the redemption that is by the blood of Christ; and this benefit contains all blessedness of life, and the consequences thereof, Rom. iv. 6. That "man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works," hath a blessedness therein, and such an extensive blessedness, in regard to the spiritual part, as Abraham had, comprehending all spiritual blessings in Christ: for "they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham," Gal. iii. 9. For this righteousness, being the fundamental blessing, is *revealed from faith to faith*;

and they that are by faith just, and justified through that righteousness, do live by faith, always receiving it, and receiving nourishment and comfort by it, Rom. i. 15.

1. They are delivered from the charge of *sin* and *fault* before God; Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Τις εγκαλεσει*: "Who shall lay any thing to their charge, or suffered to bring in, at God's tribunal, any indictment, charge, or accusation against them? It is God that justifieth them: and Christ hath died and rose again. They are redeemed from among men, being the first fruits to God and the Lamb. In their mouth there is no guile; and they are without fault [*αμομοι*] before the throne," Rev. xiv. 4, 5. See also Col. i. 22.

2. They are delivered from all *condemnation* in sentence and execution; the curse and wrath of God, Gal. iii. 13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." 1 Thes. i. 10. "Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." Psal. lxxxv.

3. "Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger." See ver. 5, 6. The wrath of God is an insupportable burden, and the foundation of all miseries; which foundation is razed, and a foundation of all blessedness laid, whereby we have peace with God, and are fully reconciled of God, Rom. v. 1, 2. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. Col. i. 21, 22. "You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unreprouvable in his sight." Now, where there is no blame before God; there can be no wrath from God.

3. They have no need to seek salvation by the *works of the law*; and so are delivered from a yoke that cannot be borne; from endless observances that pharisees and papist's have heaped up; from continual frights, doubts, fears and terrors by the law, Acts xv. 10. Rom. viii. 15; from a wrath-working law, Rom. iv. 15; from a sin-irritating law, Rom. vi. 5; from a killing law, a "ministration of death and condemnation," 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 9; "Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage," Gal. iv. 24.

4. Hence they are delivered from a *condemning conscience*, which otherwise would still gnaw them as a worm: Heb. ix. 14. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" A guilty conscience is a foul conscience; and it will make all services and duties dead works, unfit for the service of the living God: it is the blood of Christ applied by faith, that takes off the foulness of guilt from the conscience; therefore the blood of Christ hath the only efficacy this way to take off the conscience of sin, Heb. x. 1, &c. Hence they come to have a *good conscience*, 1 Pet. iii. 2; *void of offence towards God*, Acts xxiv. 16.

5. It is an *everlasting righteousness*; by which their standing in Christ is secured, Dan. ix. 24. It is an *eternal redemption* that is obtained, Heb. ix. 12. Whereas, by the law, those that were justified to-day typically might fall under condemnation; so far as to need another sacrifice for sin to-morrow: they had no real purgation of conscience from sin by these sacrifices; and therefore could not have a lasting delivery of their consciences of their guilt by them. Here it is far otherwise; here is an effectual, complete and perpetual redemption, reaching the conscience of the sinner, and for the purging away of all sins, *past, present* and *to come*, 1 John i. 7.

6. It is a righteousness of *infinite value*; because it is the righteousness of one that is God; and his name is JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, Jer. xxiii. 6. Heb. ix. 14. It is therefore more powerful to save than Adam's sin was to destroy or condemn, Rom. v. Christ is here *the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. Hence we are powerful, and conquer by faith. Likewise, there is a marvellous plenty of mercy and grace, that is brought to us by *Jehovah our righteousness*; and plenteous redemption, Psa. cxxx. 7. It must be most plentiful, because infinite. Though no creature could satisfy for sin, yet Jehovah

could do it abundantly : and therefore in Christ, God's mercy prevails high above our sins, Psa. ciii. 11, 12.

7. God's *grace* and *justice* are both engaged on our behalf in this righteousness. Justice is terrible, and seems to be against mercy, and dreadful to natural people : but it is otherwise to believers ; it is pacified and appeased through this righteousness ; it is satisfied by Christ for our sins. Justice becomes our friend, joins in with grace : and instead of pleading against us, it is altogether for us ; and it speaks contrary to what it speaks to sinners out of Christ, Josh. xxiv. 19, 20. We may also plead justice for forgiveness, through mercy in Christ, Rom. iii. 29.

8. We may be sure of *holiness* and *glory* ; delivery from the power and dominion of sin ; as well as the charge of it before God, and guilt in our consciences : for this was the end of Christ's death, Tit. ii. 4. Rom. vi. 6, 14. viii. 3, 4, 30. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." The law was the strength of sin ; for sin had its title to rule in us by reason of the curse : and thence Satan also rules ; but here is our deliverance from sin and Satan ; yea, from death too, Heb. ii. 14, 15. Hos. xiii. 14. And, by the same reason we are raised by the excellent righteousness to a better state than we had in Adam at first ; for Christ died, that we might receive the *adoption of sons*, and the *Spirit* ; that we might be brought under a new covenant, and be set in the right way of holiness, serving out of love, Gal. iii. 14. 1 John iv. 19. Gal. iv. 5. Heb. ix. 15. Rom. v. 11. Luke i. 74. Ccl. ii. 13.

9. We may be sure, hence, of a concurrence of *all* things for our good. All things shall work for good, through grace, to bring us to glory ; because God is for us, who is the creator and governor of all things, Rom. viii. 28, 31, 33. God "will never be wroth with us, nor rebuke us in anger any more," Isa. liv. 9. Rom. v. 2, 5.

10. Hence we may come before God without *confusion of face*, yea, with *boldness* to the throne of grace



in Christ's name, John xiv. 13, 24; and expect all good things from him; Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Heb. x. 22, 23. "Let us draw near with the full assurance of faith." Christ's blood pleads for us in heaven, Heb. xii. 24; and we may and are to plead boldly a satisfaction on his account.

11. We live in those times when this righteousness is *fully revealed*, and *sin made an end of*, Rom. iii. 21, 22. This is our happiness above all those that lived before Christ's coming, who were under types and shadows of this righteousness: when as we have the substance in its own light: and so we are not under the law, which they were under as a school-master. We are not servants, but sons, called to liberty, Gal. iii. 23, 26. iv. 7. v. 13. The preaching the old covenant, as a church ordinance to be urged, is now ceased; the law is not to be preached now in the same terms as Moses preached it for justification, Rom. x. 5—8. 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7. Gal. iii. 13, 24; it is contrary in terms of faith, though it were subservient.

USE II. For *examination*, whether we be in Christ, and have received this justification by faith with all our hearts.

1. Consider, whether you be made really *sensible* of sin, and your condemnation by the law. This is necessary to make us fly to Christ; and for this as one great end, was the law given, Gal. iii. 22—24. Mat. ix. 13. Acts ii. 37. Without sense of sin, there will be no prizing of Christ, or desire of holiness; but rather abuse of grace to carnal security and licentiousness. Those that were stung with the fiery serpents, looked up to the brazen serpent.

2. Dost thou trust only upon *free mercy* for justification in God's sight, renouncing all thy works whatever in this point, as not able to stand in them before God's exact justice, crying mercy with the poor publican? Perfectionists, and self-righteous persons, have no share in this matter, Luke xviii. 13, 14. Paul,

notwithstanding all that the world might think he had to plead for himself, "counted all things but dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," i. e. the redeeming and propitiation-righteousness of Christ; whereby he desired only to be justified, and which he believed in for that end, opposing it to any thing inherent in himself; which therefore he calls his *own righteousness*, Phil. iii. 6, 8, 9. Rom. iv. 5.

3. Dost thou trust with any *confidence* in Christ, not continuing in a mere suspense? In a way of mere doubting, we can receive no good thing from God, James i. 6, 7. Mere doubting will not loose the conscience from the guilt of sin, Heb. x. 22; but leaveth the soul under terrors. Abraham's confidence is the example and pattern of our justifying faith, that we would endeavour to come up unto, believing with a fulness of persuasion, in *hope against hope*, Rom. iv. 20, 24. Though a believing soul may be assaulted with many doubtings; yet it fights against them, and doth not give up itself to the dominion of them, Psal. xlii. 11. Mark ix. 24. It hath always something contrary to them, and striving with them.

4. Dost thou come to Christ for *remission of sins*, for the right end, namely, that thou mayest be *freed from the dominion of sin* before the living God, Heb. ix. 14. Psal. cxxx. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 44. If otherwise, thou dost not receive it for the right end: and desirest not really the favour and enjoyment of God, and to be in friendship with him.

5. Dost thou *walk in holiness*, and strive to evidence this justification by the fruits of faith, in good works? If otherwise, thy faith is but a *dead faith*; for a true *faith purifieth the heart*, Acts xv. 9. If Christ be thine, he will be *sanctification* as well as *righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30. Rom. viii. 1, 9. John xiii. 8. If God take thee into his favour, he will doubtless cleanse

thee. Though faith alone justifies, without the concurrence of works to the act of justification; yet that faith is not so alone, as not to be accompanied with good works: as the eye alone seeth, yet it is not alone, without other members. So the apostle James declar-eth, faith that is alone, to be dead, and biddeth us shew our faith by our works; which is to be understood, not as if works were the *conditions* of attaining justification, but sure *evidences* of justification attained by faith; and very necessary, Jam. ii. 14, 15.—The gospel is no covenant of works, requiring another righteousness for justification by doing for life. Works justify us from such accusations of men as will deny us to have justification by faith, or that we have a true and lively faith, or are good trees, Mat. xii. 33, 37; not as being our righteousness themselves, or conditions of our having Christ's righteousness, or qualifying us for it.

USE III. It serveth for *exhortation* to several duties.

1. 'To the *wicked*. It is dehortation unto them from *continuance* in sin, under God's wrath, running headlong to damnation; for here is a door of mercy opened to them; a righteousness prepared that they may be freely accepted of God. Some men are desperadoes: "They have loved strangers, and after them they will go," Jer. ii. 25. They are resolved to run the risk of it; and please themselves that they shall speed as well as others. And some men would be justified, but seek for it in a wrong way. Some will go to the Pope, to quiet their consciences by his deceits: some to their own works and performances, but you are exhorted to look out for the true righteousness. Christ saith in the gospel, Behold me, Behold me; the kingdom of heaven is open; mercy and righteousness are freely offered, Isa. lv. 6, 7. Jer. iii. 12. Repentance is preached with the remission of sins, Luke xxiv. 47. Acts ii. 38. Beware you do not neglect "this acceptable time, this day of salvation," Heb. ii. 1, 3. For, (1) if you do you remain under the *wrath* of God, John iii. 36. under the *curse* of the law;

which, like a flood, sweeps away all that are found out of this ark, the Lord Jesus Christ, *Psa. xi. 5, 6.* (2) Your condemnation will be *aggravated by refusing so great salvation, Heb. ii. 3.* You will have *no cloak for your sins*, when you refuse mercy, *John xv. 22.* You cannot say, you are undone, by your past sins, beyond recovery, and therefore it is in vain to strive; for behold, *remission of sins* is proclaimed unto you, *Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11.* And what a horrid sin is it to despise the blood of the Son of God? *John iii. 18, 36.*

**OBJECT. I.** "If God justifieth the ungodly," *Rom. iv. 5.* "what need I forsake ungodliness at all?" *Rom. vi. 1.*

**ANS.** Thou canst not seek justification *truly*, except thou hast a mind to live to God in friendship with him; for justification is God's way of taking us into friendship with him, *Rom. v. 1, 2;* and of reconciling us, *2 Cor. v. 19.* The use thou art to make of it is to seek God's friendship by it and the enjoyment of him. Why doth a man seek a pardon, if he intend to go on in rebellion and stand out in defiance to his prince? *1 Pet. ii. 24.* They seek pardon in a mocking way, that intend not to return to obedience, *Gal. vi. 7, 8.*

**OBJECT. II.** *My sins are so great, that I have no encouragement to hope.*

**ANS.** Christ's righteousness is for all *sorts of sinners* that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; and how great sinners were of both sorts? *Rom. i. ii. iii;* and even for those that killed and murdered the *Lord of glory*, *Acts ii. 23, 36.* *1 Cor. ii. 8:* for the chief of sinners, *1 Tim. i. 15.* *Acts xvi.* "Where sin abounds, grace superabounds," *Rom. v. 20.* Your sins are but the sins of a *creature*, but his righteousness is the *righteousness of God*, *John vi. 37.* *Rom. x. 3, 11, 13.*

**EXHORT. II.** It exhorts those that have a mind to turn to God, to turn the right way, by faith in Christ for justification. Let them not seek by works, as most in the world do, *Rom. ix. 31, 32.* But this doctrine seems very foolish, yea, pernicious to a natural man.

“Become a fool, that thou mayest be wise,” 1 Cor. iii. 18; otherwise you will labour in the fire, and weary yourselves for very vanity, and be under continual discomforts and discouragements; for, you can do no good work while you are in the flesh, under the law, and its curse, before God receive you into favour; for justification is, in order of nature, before true holiness of heart and life, 1 Tim. i. 5. Heb. ix. 14. Faith is the great work, and mother duty, John vi. 29. Gal. v. 6. Isa. lv. 2, &c. and therefore while you believe not, you dishonor Christ and his death, Gal. ii. 21. v. 2—4. Therefore come boldly, though you have been a great sinner; Acts x. 43; and seek righteousness in Christ Jesus with holiness, Rom. viii. 1.

Quest. But how shall I get faith?

A. Faith is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8; and by the gospel, Rom. ii. 15—17. *Faith cometh by hearing the gospel preached*, Rom. x. 17; and that comes in working faith, not in word only, but in power, 1 Thes. i. 5. beyond what can be done by natural and human attainment, John vi. 63. Therefore, if thou hast no beginning of it in thee, thy only way is to attend to the gospel, and to meditate on thy sin and misery, and Christ’s excellency, that so thou mayest be inclined in thy heart to believe, Song i. 3. Gal. ii. 16. Psal. ix. 10; for this is the way God useth to beget faith, Isa. lv. 3. But, if thou hast a desire and inclination to fly from thyself to Christ, in the bent of thy heart, so that thou preferrest Christ above all, then the Spirit hath begun and will carry on the work: so that now thou mayst pray confidently for faith, Song i. 4. Luke xi. 13. Mark ix. 24.

OBJECT. III. “But without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” Heb. xii. 14. *And, how shall I get holiness? I cannot sanctify myself; and this confidence you speak of may slacken my diligence.*

ANSW. If thou hast righteousness in Christ, God will make thee holy: and this confidence is the only

way to get holiness, because of that righteousness, Rom. v. 21. The new covenant is confirmed in him, which promiseth a new heart. If sin be forgiven, thou shalt be delivered from its power and quickened by the same death and resurrection of Christ, whereby thou art justified, Col. ii. 12, 13.

**EXHORT. III.** It exhorteth them that are *justified by faith*. 1st, *To walk humbly*, as being nothing of themselves; to acknowledge themselves enemies to God by nature, and acknowledge their sins in the greatness and heinousness of them; that they are saved freely by the righteousness of another, not by their own; yea, that they are so far fallen, that the justice of God would have been against them, if it had not been satisfied, Psal. lxxi. 16. Rom. iii. 37; but now they see that Christ hath satisfied, and his righteousness is above their sins, Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

2. *To praise and glorify God*, through Christ, for his grace. Oh! what abundant grace and love appears in God's washing and cleansing us by his Son's blood! Rev. i. 5. Gal. ii. 20; and in making his Son sin and a curse for us! Rom. v. 5, 8. 1 John iv. 9, 10. iii. 16. 2 Cor. viii. 9; and what a glorious and excellent righteousness hath God given us in Christ! Isa. lxi. 10.

3. *To walk comfortably*, upon the account of this righteousness, Isa. xl. 1, 2. Triumph over sin and affliction, Rom. viii. 33, 39. Be confident in expecting great things from God, Heb. x. 22; for, though you may be unworthy, and grace will shew you your own unworthiness, yet you stand upon the righteousness of Christ. Glory in the hope of God's glory; for, if Christ died to reconcile you, when you were enemies, much more will he save you by his life, now you are reconciled, Rom. v. 3, 10. Ask boldly for what you want; for God is in Christ's manhood as the mercy-seat. Whenever sin stings, and objections trouble you, look to the brazen serpent; confess sin, and trust for pardon; meditate on Christ's righteous-

ness, and abundance of grace in him, Rom. viii. 32.—If you find never so much ungodliness, no good qualifications ; yet Christ is at hand for your comfort, Isa. l. 10. 2 Thes. ii. 16, 17. In all your sins apply yourselves to this fountain, Zech. xiii. 1. 1 John i. 7. If sin lie on the conscience, it weakens peace and spiritual strength. Lie not under guilt with a slavish fear ; you have a righteousness to deliver you from it ; apply it by faith, that you may have no more conscience of sin as condemning, Heb. x. 2. Psal. xxxii. You have a better righteousness than any perfectionists can have.

4. *To hold fast this way of justification*, notwithstanding all the noise that is made in the world against it ; for the devil will strive to scare you out of it, or steal it from you ; as he did from the Jews, from the Galatians, the Papists, and many Protestants, Gal. i. 6. And the apostles reckon it is by a spiritual bewitchery. He will strive to get you to trust upon works, and tell you, it is for the promoting of holiness ; and to trust on works to get Christ, and to lay works lowest in the foundation. If you lose this righteousness of Christ, under any colour or pretence whatever, you lose all, Gal. v. 2, 3. Do not so dishonor Christ, as to think of procuring that by works which you have so fully in Christ. Think not that the gospel requires another justification to gain this ; for, the gospel is no legal covenant, but a declaration of the righteousness of faith ; and we being justified, are *heirs* by adoption and promise, Gal. iii. 24—26. iv. 7. This is the doctrine which glorifieth God, and abaseth the creature ; which is a great mark of truth. Beware therefore, of carnal reason ; which will go quite contrary, and make Christ's righteousness a stumbling-stone to thee, 2 Pet. ii. 8. Rom. ix. 32, 34.

5. *To walk as one that enjoys the favor of God in Christ*. Let him have the honor of it. Walk therefore in holiness, knowing by what price you are redeemed, 1 Pet. i. 17, 18. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 2 Pet. i. 5,



11. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Love God that hath loved you first, 1 John iv. 19. Psa. cxxvi. 16. Believe that God will enable you, for the practice of holiness, Rom. vi. 14. Particularly, walk in love to the saints; exercise forgiveness to your enemies. Sense of your own sins, and God's forgiving you, will cause you to pity and forgive others; else you cannot pray or trust for forgiveness of your own sins upon reasonable grounds, Eph. iv. 31, 32. Mat. vi. 14, 15. xviii. 21. Desire grace may be exalted upon others; and wait patiently for the full declaration of justification at the great day, Gal. v. 5. Acts iii. 19; for here, your justification is known only by faith; but in outward things you are dealt with as a sinner; then your righteousness shall appear openly, and you shall be dealt with according to it.

THE END.







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